

**A MODEL FOR IMPROVING RACIAL UNDERSTANDING
AMONG YOUTH IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH
IN ILLINOIS AND WISCONSIN**

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A FINAL DOCUMENT SUBMITTED TO
THE DOCTORAL STUDIES COMMITTEE
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
DAYTON, OHIO
May, 2009

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ABSTRACT

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by

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The focus of The Christian Church in Illinois and Wisconsin (CCIW) was to introduce a model for improving racial understanding among youth. To achieve this goal, participants from four areas of CCIW were engaged in multicultural experiences such as interviews, retreats and Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciling training. This project was helpful in removing racial barriers and the youth received a framework for dealing with Racism from a Christian faith perspective.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To those who helped to make this work possible, Kimberly Simmons and family (Chaundrea, Alexandria, Sean and Sam). To all who supported with your prayers: Shelley, Dwight, Karen, Ms. Betty, Leslie, Little Robert, Toni Norman and Ernestine. A very special thank you to all who helped read, edit and advise the project. To the CCIW Administrative staff. Also, to Rev. L. Neil Sallee and Rev. Dorothy N. Sallee, Rev. Kerry Waller-Dueholm, Rev. Dr. William Chris Hobgood, Rev. Dr. Burley F. Herrin, Rev. Dwight E. Bailey, Mrs. Martha J. Herrin, Rev. Larry L. Jackson, Mrs. Minta Colburn, Elder Martha Shine, Mrs. Camille Taylor, and Gloria Carey-Branch, Rev. Ellen H.G. Culpepper. A special thanks to Rev. Brittany Barber and Mr. Kevin Metzner for a wonderful dinner & ideas for the cross-cultural mission trip.

Prayer Groups: *Monday Morning Prayer Group* in Rockford, Illinois: Pat & Steve Dahle, Kathy Rudolph, Inger, Mary Beth Johnson, Ms. Siberlia White, and Pastor Nancy Abiera. *The Monday Marys'*: Pat Dahle, Anita Kapfer, Myra Pollard, Carol Markley, and Geri Johnson-I love you! *Tuesday morning Prayer Group*: (Women Healed In Praye) and the Girl Friend's Beauty Salon for your constant love and covering prayers. Mother Wanda L. Bragg, Sister Rhonda G. Page, Sister Michelle Mattingly, Sister Gina Harding, Deana Steffey, Jade Pettigrew, Tiffany, Mrs. Pat Hayes, Mother Winters, Kim Owens, Leslie Hayes, Cara, Bianca, and Lisa at Comcast!

Credo Women's Ministries, Incorporated: I want to personally thank all of the Women of Credo who directly or indirectly participated in this project. Thank you for fourteen great years! May God continue to use us as a beacon of light in Christendom and around the world! I love you! Minister Ayanna Powell-Lee, Minister Angelique Byrd, Minister Tracey L. Curry and Minister Lavonna M. Jones.

Mentors: To the greatest mentors this side of Heaven: The Rev. Dr. Ricky A. Woods, Pastor of First Baptist West, Charlotte, North Carolina and The Rev. Dr. Terry Thomas, Pastor of West Durham Baptist Church, and Author. Thank you for being willing to share your time and love of the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ with us. Thank you for imparting into the lives of your students the need for the Church and Academy to make connection. Thank you for introducing us to the reality of scholarship, the authenticity of leadership and the art of making a real difference in the lives of those whom we serve. Thanks for encouraging us to ‘follow you’ and we would not go wrong! Your integrity and scholarship were life changing. You both are walking-bibliographies! Only a God could have produced the two of you; and, for this, I am truly grateful. It has been a terrific journey! God bless you!

Grace & Peace,

Christal L. Williams-09

DEDICATION

To the lives and legacies of the Black women who raised me. They loved me, taught me, disciplined me, cheered and hugged me into a life of Faith, Peace, and Reconciliation. I am the better because of these women.

To my mother, Norma Jean Williams (1950-2006)

To my Grandaunt, Lula “Sweet” London (1927-2004)

To my maternal Grandmother, Wilma Juanita Barber (1936-1986)

To the present and future lives of my Godchildren. May you experience a world that will not judge you based on the color of your skin, but will encourage you based on the content of your character, leadership, scholarship, and achievements. I love you and this project is just for you!

To Mr. Robert Lee Hubbard, III (1988-Present)

To Ms. Chaundrea T. Simmons (1993-Present)

To Ms. Alexandria K. Simmons (1995-Present)

To Mr. Sean A. Simmons (2003-Present)

To Mr. Samuel A. Simmons (2005-Present)

To Ms. Akkowa J. Alexander (1984-Present)

To Mr. Nasir A. Mubarak (2003-Present)

To Mr. Nyeem A. Mubarak (2008-Present)

To all the other children I know - those who belong to me and those who do not!

PREFACE

As an African-American clergywoman, I have been privileged to serve in ministry for over twenty-five years. Each year is filled with anticipation and excitement as I wait for what is to come next. I accepted my call to ministry at the tender age of six. At that time, I knew God had chosen me to be a change agent for the church and the world. With this knowledge, my ministerial assignments have consisted of building relationships with people of all ethnicities and cultures and, together in a quest for being the whole people of God, working towards the eradication of racism.

The foundation of my life's work and ministry is centered on building authentic relationships and offering resources to uplift and encourage not only the Body of Christ, but all of humanity. Early in life, I found building relationships and providing resources for children and youth were avenues for fostering education about what it means to live together as a unified people who come from a variety of different cultures and neighborhoods. I have always been at the forefront of treading new ground. I consider myself a pioneer and trendsetter in the community as well as in other areas of my life. This helps to explain why I am the only person of color and the youngest associate on the Region's staff. This scenario has been the case throughout my entire life.

Today as one of three Regional pastors, part of my job description is to work closely with many ethnicities, cultures, and ages. I work alongside people in our congregations to raise awareness in the church and world about becoming pro-reconciling and anti-racist. The Region of Illinois and Wisconsin has an Anti-Racism/Pro Reconciling team. Their education offers to both individuals and congregations courses

on becoming an anti-racist and pro-reconciling church and world. For some persons this training is long overdue. For others it is irrelevant. However, in the face of the Twenty-first Century changes in our churches, country and world, there is a need for training, especially when all persons should be able to live, work, and worship together. I am afraid that humanity still combats this issue.

I believe racism is a sin—a sin that keeps us separated from God and one another. This unfortunate mark on society continues to overtake our systems, country, people, and land. Therefore, we all must work diligently at eradicating its harmful effects on all persons. We must continue to reevaluate policies, procedures, and practices that continue to affect the ways in which we might live together as neighbors and children of God. I am convinced it will be our children and our children's children who will help us see past our perceptions and stereotypes into the beautiful view that God originally intended for us all.

That is why this project! As one who works with youth, I feel it is important to create a model that invites both youth and adults to explore, to learn, and to dialogue about ways in which the church can improve racial understanding. It is time to find new, creative and fresh ways to have open and honest dialogue as we all seek to form authentic and life-changing relationships. Therefore, I have designed a model with these goals in mind. This is the story of “A Model for Improving Racial Understanding among Youth in the Christian Church in Illinois and Wisconsin.”

I hope this model will alter past attitudes, current practices, and behavior in our churches. I hope that youth who participate in the model will introduce our Region to new and exciting ways of radically affecting programming and being church together.

INTRODUCTION

Racism is part of the American culture. It is everywhere. It is present in relationships, systems and institutions. It is our country's conflict and embarrassment. This paper defines Racism according to the Crossroads ministry model, "race prejudice plus the misuse of power in systems and institutions."¹ Racism in society and the church is problematic. Many do not believe Racism still exists. They believe that the problem with race evaporated with the death of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Historically the western church whose origins were rooted in Racism and separation continues to perpetuate these exclusive practices. W.E.B. DuBois says, "For the problem with the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line."² The writer of this paper suggests one hundred years later with all the advances in America, Racism continues to be a problem in the Twenty-first Century; and therefore, has developed a spiritual model for improving racial understanding among youth in the Illinois and Wisconsin Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

This six-month study and Anti-Racist Pro-Reconciling model grew out of the life, ministry, and experience of the writer. This paper will concentrate on the need for the Illinois & Wisconsin Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to grapple with the fact that the sin of Racism exists in the Regional Church structures. Some of these sins are as follows: the lack of ministerial placements in the church for pastors of color;

¹ Crossroads Ministry Model, Racine Wisconsin.

² W.E.B. Dubois, *The Souls of Black Folks* (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1903), 3.

the lack of participation at Regional youth and camping programs; and the lack of People of Color at the decision and policy-making table. The sin of Racism, which is both a spiritual and theological problem, continues to perpetuate a lack of authenticity in the Regional relationships and partnership with local congregations, pastors, laity, and youth. This lack of authenticity is apparent in the way members are selected to serve on boards and committees. Because selection is based upon how long people have been in the Region and whether or not they have cooperated in previous events, People of Color are at a disadvantage principally because of work schedules or family obligations.

This writer believes it is time for the Regional Church to look at itself and make the critical decisions necessary to be one church, one body of Christ. The writer will take readers through a six-month journey as she presents a model for improving racial understanding among youth in the Christian Church in Illinois and Wisconsin. The writer feels the church is at a crucial turning point in history. She feels the youth in the Regional Church must be led to resist Racism in our churches and ultimately in the world. Youth are at a time in their lives when they are open to building relationships and experiencing educational opportunities with their peers such as student exchange in high school assignments and worship experiences leading them to spend time with students who are not like them culturally.

A Model for Improving Racial Understanding among Youth in the Christian Church in Illinois and Wisconsin will be a reflection of our grassroots denomination. It will be innovative and ask the questions that the church needs to answer for the sake of the gospel message and a better world. As the writer researched for other models, she found none publicly known in the church world. In addition, she found none that offered

both the youth and church perspective. This is a model unlike what the traditional models on Racism have offered. This model will offer: A) youth perspective on the issue of Racism in the Regional church; B) youth the opportunity to take part in Anti-Racism and pro-reconciling workshops; and C) finally, youth take a three-day cross-cultural mission trip and dialogue with Scripture to foster understanding and authentic relationships with other cultures.

Dr. Rufus Burrow, Jr., writes, “No black youth should be denied an opportunity to participate in the struggle for liberation.”³ The writer says that no youth should be denied participation in the struggle to gain racial understanding and liberation in the Region of the Christian Church in Illinois and Wisconsin. Although the participants in this model are African-American, Caucasian, Korean, Hispanic, and Native American, the writer focuses primarily upon the relationships between African-American and Caucasian membership. Throughout history, relationships between African-Americans and Caucasian have been notably more hostile and fragmented.

Chapter One of this document describes the demographic characteristics of the context in which this study is carried out, including its racial and cultural make-up.

Chapter Two provides readers a snapshot of the literature the writer used in support of the model. This chapter offers some of the most current reading materials on the subject.

Chapter Three examines the historical, biblical, and theological perspectives of what it means for all of God’s children to be church together. It will investigate past

³ Rufus Burrow, Jr., *James H. Cone and Black Liberation Theology* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 1994), 186.

relationships and connections with members of the Christian Church in Illinois and Wisconsin.

Chapter Four offers the methodological design of the project. It will show how the project began, those who were involved, and the different types of research used to support this project.

Chapter Five gives an in-depth view of what happened during the implementation of the model and will share the data collected, its analysis, and some of the results and attitudes of the participants.

Chapter Six summarizes the project and offers author's comments and additional key points for future research of this model.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

The Christian Church in Illinois and Wisconsin is one of thirty-three Regions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, one of the first mainline protestant denominations with its roots on American soil. This frontier organization prides itself on its commitment to education, scholarship, community, and unity of believers. The sacredness of Word and Table is taken seriously each Sunday as local congregations partake in the Lord's Supper.

The sin of Racism and its effects on relationships with youth in the Regional Church must be addressed. The writer believes this is a direct result of historical practices within the country and the church. It is the writer's belief that the youth in the Region are now exemplifying the courage, spirituality, and willingness needed to work on racial understanding and are much more willing than most adults are to move towards the eradication of this sin. The writer's participation on the Regional Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciling team has afforded her the opportunity to experience the first resistance adults displayed at workshops to introduce, educate, and expand the dialogue on race and the church.

The writer chose this area of ministry because of her experience with youth and her extensive work with adult leadership in regional ministry. The writer has over ten years as a regional staff person in the Region of the Christian Church in Illinois and Wisconsin. The Regional Church must look at the dismemberment and fragmentation

found throughout the entire Regional and denominational Body of Christ. One example of dismemberment is the separate biennial convocations for People of Color. These convocations were formed out of a need for People of Color to have their own convention and places where they could worship in their own cultures. Also, it began as a place for Blacks in the denomination to showcase their leadership abilities. A sense of full acceptance and equality in leadership in the General and Regional levels of the church could possibly bring to an end a tradition of separate convocations.

Separation will continue to perpetuate Christians who do not know the fullness of Jesus Christ found in knowing, loving, and caring about persons who are different. With this fragmentation, it is impossible to find distinctive ways to live out the representation of Jesus' whole church, whole body, and the unity expressed by the denomination's founders. This will be a new way of thinking and living ministry within this Region and throughout the denomination.

However, the writer believes that the youth will take the lead in assisting the local Church as it strives to improve racial understanding in the Regional church and the rest of world.

Both the Regional and General church have offered weekend retreats, and anti-Racism three-day meetings to enlighten and introduce the church to Anti-Racist and Pro-reconciling attitudes and behaviors. Anti-Racist behaviors include, "not treating people unfairly because of the color of their race."¹ Another behavior is that of trivializing conversation on race by stating that it is not important or one cannot see color of any

¹ Robin Parker and Pamela Smith Chambers, *The Anti-Racist Cookbook: A Recipe Guide for Conversations about Race that Goes Beyond Covered Dishes and Kum-Bah-Yah* (New Jersey: Roselle and Crandall, 2005), 91.

individual. Parker states an appropriate response could be, “I do, but seeing color doesn’t mean I see race as a deficit.”²

The church has offered youth summer camping programs and one-day training events on the issue. The models have been somewhat helpful because they happened. However, the difficulty lies in the polity, the political and foundational structure of the denomination that is outdated and contains the seeds of exclusion, separation, and Racism throughout its pages.

The context in which this writer serves is the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Illinois and Wisconsin. The Region consists of 168 congregations. Four of these are in Wisconsin. Six congregations in the state of Illinois relate to the Mid-America Region through the St. Louis area. From the Regional office in Bloomington, it is approximately 275 miles to the congregation furthest south (Metropolis) and 275 miles to the congregations furthest north (in Milwaukee). Parts of the Region of Illinois and Wisconsin (CCIW) are urban and parts are extremely rural. Major cultural demarcation lines can be observed between the Chicago area and northern “upstate” Illinois (excluding Chicagoland) and “downstate” Illinois (majority south of I-80). Our mission statement is as follows: “Growing Disciples Congregations for Healthy, Vital Ministry.” Within this mission statement the staff’s mission is “E3”—Encourage, Equip and Empower.

The CCIW Region is organized into four areas: the South, the East, the West and the Urban/Metro areas. The model involved twelve participants, two participants from

² Ibid., 82.

each area and four adults.) These areas are part of a de-centralized approach to area ministry and programming.

As one of the three regional pastors, part of the writer's job description is to work closely with many ethnicities, cultures, ages, and genders. She works alongside people in congregations to bring awareness to the need for our church and world to become pro-reconciling and anti-racist. The writer believes that Racism is sin—a separation from God. Raymond Blanks in his article, "Conversion, Covenant, Commitment, and Change" also contends that Racism is a sin. He writes, "Racism is a sin because it divides humanity, denies the dignity of all persons and distorts the human worth of all of divine creation."³ This sin did not appear overnight. It is not going to disappear overnight. It took generations for this disease to take control of our systems, country, people, and land. Therefore, the church must work diligently to eradicate its harmful effects on individuals, youth, families, groups, and churches. Policies, practices, and procedures such as the criteria on the order of ordained and license ministry do not accommodate People of Color and how ministers are selected to serve congregations in our Region and how individuals are selected to serve on the Regional executive committee. These practices continue to affect the ways in which the church might live together as neighbors and children of God.

³ Raymond Blanks, *Conversion, Covenant, Commitment, and Change*, in *Ending Racism in the Church*, ed. Susan E. Davies and Sister Paul Teresa Hennessee, S.A. (Cleveland, OH: United Church Press, 1998), 103.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY MODEL

The writer of this document chose to shape the review of literature by laying a foundation that offers both an historical and a contemporary view of the Church on the issue of Racism. In defining the problem of Racism in the Region of the Christian Church in Illinois and Wisconsin, the writer's choice of literature spoke to the heart of a sin that continues to separate and divide all persons. Racism is a spiritual and theological problem. This literature review offers a wellspring of information on both the spiritual and theological perspectives on Racism. These writings helped the writer gain a broader understanding on the issue of Racism in American and Religious history. The writer of this paper categorized her reading selections in three ways: Historical, Theological and Biblical. The writer asserts, that without, education it is impossible to have the necessary tools needed to bring understanding and exposure to Racism and its systems in the church and the world.

In the *Encyclopedia Stone-Campbell Movement* by Douglas A. Foster, Paul M. Blowers, Anthony L. Dunnivant, and D. Newell Williams, the writer of this paper traces the history of the Christian Churches movement. It especially, gives a brief summary on the history of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) denomination. It was the first denomination of the Stone-Campbell movement. This Encyclopedia helps the writer support the Historical foundation section of the paper.

Historically, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has gone through many life cycles. Mark G Toulouse, in *Joined in Discipleship: the Shaping of Contemporary*

Disciples Identity, offers a contemporary accounting of the history of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) denomination in the United States and Canada. It offered an overview of the life cycles and movement of one of the oldest denominations founded on American soil. It helped the writer understand when and where Black Disciples first fit into the life and organization of a predominately-White church.

“Voices from Cane Ridge” edited by Rhodes Thompson. This book shares with the writer of this paper a brief history of the denomination’s Cane Ridge, Kentucky, roots. This book gives voice to the four founders as they lived at the peak of this country’s frontier movement. It helped the writer articulate accurately the founders’ thoughts on slavery, Racism, and unity on the frontier, and their effects on the entire church.

So Great a Cloud of Witnesses: Stories Celebrating the First 150 Years of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Illinois and Wisconsin by Dorothy Logan Sallee. Dorothy Sallee is both storyteller and historian for the Christian Church in Illinois & Wisconsin. Her written and oral work helped the writer of this project to display an authentic offering of religious life in the Regional Church in Illinois and Wisconsin.

In the book *Journey in Faith: A History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* by William E. Tucker and Lester G. McAllister, tells a history of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) that helps to shape and keep alive the importance and values of the “Brotherhood.” Brotherhood is the term used to reference the denomination before instituting the 1960’s restructuring plan of the denomination.

The book *The Faith We Affirm: Basic Beliefs of Disciples of Christ* by Ronald E. Osborn spells out in-depth who the Disciples had become as a denomination during the “RESTRUCTURE ERA”. This work included looking at the denomination’s “Affirmation of Faith” and several principles of the sacrament of communion, biblical interpretation, and theological perspectives used by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) weekly. It told the writer of this paper why the sacrament of Communion is the center of the denomination’s theology. To further study the restructuring years of the (Disciples of Christ), the writer used, Robert L. Friedly and D. Duane Cummins book, in *The Search for Identity, Disciples of Christ-The Restructure Years*. In this book, key concerns were identified by some Black Disciple members about equality in the church. For example: a) not having equality in the church; b) the absence of black leadership and; c) the racist practices in towns and congregations.

Religion in America Fifth Edition by Winthrop S. Hudson and John Corrigan This book helped support the claim that early denominations tended to downplay the idea of slavery in the church. This avoidance tended to limit disturbance and interruption of growth and success of newly born denominations in America. This volume helped to shed further light on the historical perspective of slavery and religion in American history.

The writer of this paper used the book *Seeds of Racism in the Soul of America* by Paul R. Griffin to bring an African-American historical perspective of Racism in the life of White Protestant Christian Churches. This work traced relationships between Western Christianity and African-American slaves for nearly four hundred years. Griffin’s work traces back to the beginning of Puritan religion in America.

In the book *Before the Mayflower; a History of Black America*, Lerone Bennett, Jr., offers the writer of this paper a formal insightful about the beginning of Africans and African-American's presence in America. It traced the earliest roots of those who came to the new territory as indentured servants. Bennett gives the writer a historical movement of how indentured servitude turned into the social economical system of slavery.

C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, writers of the book *The Black Church in the African-American Experience* offers the sociology of the seven historical Black churches. This book helped the writer grasp and understand by what circumstances the Black church was established. The Black Church was established out of a means emotional and spiritual support for slaves who had no other recourse in history.

Albert J. Raboteau in both his volumes, *African-American Religion and Slave Religion* is able to take the readers of African-American history and Religion on a journey through the history of African-American Religion and the Black church experience. Raboteau writes, in "*African- American Religion*" "The history of African-American Religion exemplifies America's long and dramatic engagement with ethnic pluralism and the central role of race in shaping American life."¹

In the book, *The Church in the Life of the Black Family*, author Charles Wallace Smith continues to describe the lives, families, and well-being of those Africans who came to the Colonies of America to work. In this book, Smith gives a detailed depiction of the lives and degradation experienced by the Black family during slavery. Smith talks

¹ Albert J. Raboteau, *African- American Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 7-12.

about the stripping of languages, separation of families and the changing of names to break down the moral character of slaves and cause feelings of dehumanization.

The Black Church Credit Union is another source that speaks about the lives and families of those who lived during slavery. Perry E. Henderson gives stories of those persons who experienced slavery. William C. Emerson, M.D., *Stories and Spirituals of the Negro Slave*, give single accounts of slavery in America. This book brings life to the voices of those who were considered voiceless. *Myth of the Negro Past*- Melville J. Herskovits offers insight into the history of Blacks in America who sought liberation from slavery and degradation.

The writer of this document has chosen Liberation, Black, Womanist, Latin American, and Westernize Christian theologies to undergird the writings of the theoretical foundation. In the text, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, author Daniel Migliore in this theology textbook introduces briefly several Christian theologies. The writer used this volume in helping to simplify the meaning of Christian and Liberation Theology.

In the book, *James H. Cone and Black Liberation Theology* - Dr. Rufus Burrow, gives great conversation, scholarship, and extensive research in assessing the life and voice of Dr. James Hal Cone. This book was instrumental in supporting the writer's theological foundational points in the document. Dr. Burrow's work brings a prospective that encourages liberation theologians to look deeper at the side of Jesus who came to relieve and stand on the side of those who are oppressed. Burrow also describes significant trends from the 1960's about youth and their questions, responses, and statements regarding Racism.

Black theology was one of the first theologies articulating how Christian theology was used to keep black people oppressed, especially because of the color of their skin. In this reading the writer of the project shows that both blacks who are liberated and Whites who oppress them must understand that any theology that uplifts Racism is neither Christian nor moral. This segment of Liberation theology gives voice to the voiceless, empowers those who are powerless, and introduces a God who liberates and gives hope and stands on the side of the oppressed. This volume is a staple in and throughout the project. *Jesus and the Disinherited* is another staple in the document.

The Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman offered a great view into the theologian's work asking its readers to see Jesus at work in the midst of the oppressed and those who struggle with poverty, Racism, and those living on the fringes of life. The significance of this work for the writer of this project is that the Gospel message, according to Thurman, asks us to read the Gospel through the lens of Jesus Christ who endured a life of pain and suffering and one who relates to those persons who are marginalized and suffered as well.

Dr. James H. Cone, author of the book, *A Black Theology of Liberation* answers the question about "Westernized Christian Theology?" He asserts that a westernized Christian theology is a more mystical and exclusive way of looking at the nature of God at work in the lives of all persons. In this book, Cone takes to task the idea of a Christian theology that supports the systems of racial oppression. In this book, he focuses on those whom he terms as, "Amerindians and the enslavement of Blacks." Cone helps the writer of this paper to see a White theology that supports the "White oppressor, giving religious sanction to the genocide of Amerindians and the enslavement of Africans.

From the very beginning to the present day, American White theological thought has been “patriotic,” either by defining the theological task independently of Black suffering (the liberal northern approach) or by defining Christianity as compatible with White Racism (the conservative southern approach).² The writer uses this material to support the Theoretical Foundation section of the final document.

Dr. James H. Cone introduces in the heart of the Civil Rights era the idea and legitimacy of a Black Theology. Dr. Cone in *Risks of Faith: the Emergence of a Black Theology of Liberation, 1968-1998* lends further support and credence to the idea of Liberation Theology in all aspects of human life. Cone outlines in this material the socio-economic, political, and religious context in the lives of Black Americans. He also speaks more to the introduction of a Black Liberation theology as a means for teaching and preaching in the Black pulpit.

Shoes That Fit Our Feet: Sources for a Constructive Black Theology by Dwight N. Hopkins. The writer of the project used this volume to help with interpretation of the theological foundation paper of the final project. In this volume, Hopkins offers African-American theologians a new and refreshing look at reasons for Liberation theology in the church. Here Hopkins insists the writer of this document take time to “grapple” with the idea of Liberation theology showing up in every area of African-American society and life.

Theologian H. Richard Niebuhr was one who James H. Cone used in supporting his work in the Liberation theology Movement. His work in *Christ & Culture*, Niebuhr

² James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation: Twentieth Anniversary Edition* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1990), 4.

shows that the Christ against Culture movement helps the entire church to live beyond separatism and exclusive culture, while moving toward seeing a Jesus who calls all humanity to unity in and through his work in socio-political culture. This unpopular stance taken by Niebuhr turned the Christian theological world upside down. This shake up happened when He challenged the White theological world to look at Jesus as a radical in his ministry and message.

In the book, *Racism and God-Talk: a Latino Perspective* by Ruben Rosario Rodriguez, the writer of this paper found a strong Latino perspective of Liberation Theology to assist in comparing and contrasting the work of Latino theologians with that of Dr. James Hal Cone. In the book *Systemic Theology Perspectives from Liberation Theology*, authors Jon Sobrino and Ignacio Ellacuria helped the writer in a quest to look more closely at the significance of the Eucharist in its call to help unify the body of Christ. This Latin-American perspective helped to bring comparison and contrast to the Christian Theological thought of the Eucharist and its importance in the life and role of Church.

Reconstructing Christian Theology- Rebecca S. Chopp, Mark Lewis Taylor, Editors .The editors of the volume share essays about human equality, and tell why it is important to address racial justice in the world and the church. This reading offered a redefining and a more contemporary look at Christian Theology. This volume focused on a revisiting and offered a fresh perspective on social justice issues that were perhaps ignored a generation ago.

Biblical Interpretation A Road Map - Frederick C. Tiffany & Sharon Ringe. As the writer did exegetical studies on passages of scripture, she relied upon this required

reading to look at the text through cultural lens other than her own. It also asked the writer to research more in-depth the Biblical passages needed to support the final project.

The Social Visions of the Hebrew Bible: A Theological Introduction by J. David Pleins. This volume offered the writer a significant look into the life, culture, and customs of the Hebrew Bible and its relationship with Yahweh. It spoke clearly to the social customs and norms of the day. It provided the writer of this project a point of view that helped to distinguish what the definition of oppression is in both Old and New Testament readings.

Substance of Things Hope For by Samuel Dewitt Proctor. In this book the writer is made familiar with the life and ministry of the Rev. Dr. Samuel Dewitt Proctor whose life and ministry influenced both Blacks and Whites alike. His leadership helped to pave the way for many Black scholars, preachers and theologians.

No Longer Slaves by Brad R. Braxton- This volume encouraged the writer of this paper to look closely at New Testament epistles and narratives found in Galatians to support Biblical foundational material. In this reading, Dr. Braxton presents powerful insight into the spiritualities and lives of those who are part of the African American community. His work helped the writer look at the presence of the African-American community and experience in Biblical narratives. Braxton's purpose in this reading is to clarify, for readers, that there is the "enduring religious and cultural influence the Bible exerts upon countless societies in the world." Braxton says, "Although chattel slavery in America had ended well over a hundred years ago, another form of slavery, ideological in

nature but still vicious, continued to hold countless African-Americans in a vise-grip.”³

He is suggesting an “ideological Emancipation Proclamation; might be needed.”

In the book *The Politics of Jesus* by Obrey M. Hendricks, the writer was encouraged to see Jesus’ teachings in a social political light. This volume stretched the writer’s own traditional view of the works of Jesus as healer, deliver and one who saves individuals from sin. This book helped the writer to see a Jesus whose message and ministry “employs various tactics to address the social, economic, and political conditions of his day and their terrible effects upon the lives of his people.”⁴ This volume helped the writer of this paper to consider Jesus’ teaching and “tactics as strategic models” for a comparison of today’s socio-political agenda in the church and the nation. This book helped the writer see Jesus as countercultural. It also helped to focused more “on the words and deeds of Jesus.”⁵

In the book *Race Matter*, author Cornel West helps the writer of this project to see that the “color-line” in America is still an issue that must continue to challenge in the Twenty-First Century. In this book, West asks those who are in leadership both African-American and White to take seriously the need for more intentional conversations about Racism and the treatment of Blacks in this country, so that the process of healing in our nation would occur.

³ Brad R. Braxton, *No Longer Slaves: Galatians and African American Experience* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2002), x.

⁴ Obrey M. Hendricks, Jr., *The Politics of Jesus* (New York: Doubleday, 2006), 18.

⁵ Ibid.

Racial Conflict & Healing: An Asian-American Theological Perspective -

Andrew Sung Park. Dr. Park, in this work, shared with the writer of this document and the church the opportunity to engage in racial healing and reconciliation using a theology known to the Korean Community as “Han.” Dr. Park uses ‘Han’ to describe the pain caused by social injustices of all kinds.

Race, Racism, and the Biblical Narratives - Cain Hope Felder in this volume encouraged the reader to look closely at Old Testament narratives to support Biblical foundational material. In this reading, Dr. Felder presents a positive essay, which helped the writer look at the presence of race and ethnic identity in Biblical narratives. Felder’s purpose in this reading is to “clarify, for modern readers, the profound differences in racial attitudes between those in the Biblical world and in the subsequent history of Eurocentric interpretation.”⁶

Stony the Road We Trod African-American Biblical Interpretation - Cain Hope Felder, Editor. The writer has cited several sources from Felder’s Biblical interpretation. This particular source presents the African-American perspective and offers the readers an opportunity to struggle with the cause and effects of the possibility of false or erroneous interpretation of Scripture. It gave flavor to the entire Biblical foundations part of the document. This volume also introduced a strong concept of African-American scholarship in the area of Biblical studies and interpretation.

In his book *Trouble in Biblical Waters*, Cain Hope Felder shows an Old Testament perspective on Justice. He helps its readers to connect with both the Greco-Roman and Jewish outlines of biblical justice and social injustices.

⁶ Cain Hope Felder, *Race, Racism and the Biblical Narratives* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press), 2.

In the books, *Dismantling Racism: The Continuing Challenge to White America*, and *Understanding & Dismantling Racism: The Twenty-First Century Challenge to White America* by Joseph Brandt, the writer of this paper examined Racism in the church and the world. It guided both a theological and biblical reflection on the harmful effects of one group's domination over another. Brandt is one of the contemporary writers against Racism and an advocate for reconciliation in the church. He is also one of the founders of the Crossroad Anti-Racism Ministries. *The Crossroads Ministry Model*: This interfaith and community based organization offers a religious view of Anti-Racism training and organizing. The materials gathered from their workbook helps religious organizations define the term "Racism" and offers a historical perspective on the racist practices in this country on three levels: a) Institutional Racism, b) Cultural Racism and c) Individual Racism. This booklet helps to support the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Illinois and Wisconsin's working definition of Racism.

The People Called, the Growth of Community in the Bible - Paul D. Hanson in this classic text supports the writer's Biblical foundation. The writer used the text to help tie unifying themes of unity, community and covenant and justice. The writer looked at those themes in light of Israel's relationship with Yahweh.

The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles- Ben Witherington, III, The writer of the project used this volume to help with the Exegetical study in the New Testament part of the Theoretical foundation. Witherington offers a fresh perspective on the interpretation of the Epistle to the Ephesians. *Basic Bible Commentary Volume 24* - Earl S. Johnson, Jr., The writer used this commentary to assist in the biblical interpretation of the document.

Harper's Bible Commentary - Robert Wilson and Nils Altstrup Dahl. The writer used this commentary to help with the interpretation of both the Old Testament texts. Margaret MacDonald's *Sacra Pagina: Colossians and Ephesians* and Ehud Ben Zvi, one of the editors of the *Jewish Study Bible Tanakh Translation* were both used as tools for exegetical study of New Testament foundations. The writer used, Pheme Perkins, *The New Interpreter's Bible: Ephesians, ed. Volume 11* and Michael D. Coogan, *The Oxford History of the Biblical World* to support New Testament foundations.

The writer found Deborah Flemister Mullen, *Baptism as Sacrament of Struggle and Rite of Resistance*, in *Ending Racism in the Church*, ed. Susan E. Davies and Sister Paul Teresa Hennessee, S.A.; a staple for helping to describe Racism in the heart of the Christian Church in American and beyond.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada is a mainline denomination, like many others, born out of the nature of its social and cultural surroundings. It is of a Reformed tradition that separated from the Roman Catholic Church. This Reformed denomination is associated with Zwingli in Zurich, John Calvin in Geneva, the Reformed churches of Germany and the Netherlands, the Presbyterians of Scotland, and the English Puritans.¹

David Newell Williams in his article describes the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as a reformed North American mainstream moderate denomination. He says,

Denominations are identified by their testimony, traditions, name, institutions, and relationships. With Christians everywhere, this church testifies that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and proclaims him Lord and Savior of the World, Our traditions of Baptism and the Lords supper are ecumenical. While practicing believer's immersion, most congregations affirm the baptisms of other churches. The Lord's Table is open to all who follow Christ. Our name combines the family name Christian with the distinctive term, Disciples of Christ, which points to our identity not as those who have attained to the fullness, but are yet learners. Our institutions are accountable to Christ. Our relationships as congregations, regions and general ministries affirm the unity of Christ's church.²

¹ Newell Williams, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2008), 39.

² Ibid.

This frontier denomination with its roots at Cane Ridge Meeting House, near Paris, Kentucky, and Western Pennsylvania was once the largest religious tradition born on American soil. The founders of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) were a group of non-traditional reformers resisting governmental domination. Unlike other mainline denominations, its four founders, Barton W. Stone, a fifth generation American, Thomas and Alexander Campbell, immigrants from Northern Ireland and Walter Scott, an immigrant from Scotland, criticized and condemned their experiences in the Presbyterian Church. They believed that creeds and confessions were divisive to the church. They emphasized the importance of God's grace made known to all persons through Jesus Christ. They understood that believers should be immersed during baptism in order for sins to be forgiven. They also believed that the Eucharist should be celebrated every Lord's Day for the lifting up of one's spirituality, renewal, and unity of the church. The idea of prayer and confession in the midst of a congregation was a key belief.

"The Disciples have stressed that the united church, founded upon the testimony of apostolic claims, constituted the only place where Christian could discover and experience the true Spiritual power of the Christian life."³ With most of the founders' time being spent on the frontier, they lived life as pioneers. They believed in a time for studying, evangelizing, publishing, corresponding, and making time for their families.

³ Mark G. Toulouse, *Joined in Discipleship* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1997), 32.

“All four men severed ties with old denominations.”⁴ Through their experiences, scriptural study, and spiritual discernment they rejected the religious traditions they previously had served and believed them to be narrow, divisive, and often unscriptural in their beliefs and practices. In a time of religious debates and sectarian exclusive practices, the founders stressed a need for unity, and fellowship amongst all believers. Alexander Campbell opposed infant baptism, and preferred immersion for believing adults. Barton Stone struggled with the Calvinist view of theology. They affirmed the priority of scripture, focusing on the New Testament scriptures over creeds and thoughts. These pioneer ministers stressed the unity of all believers except in one area. This is in the area of Slavery and Segregation.

SLAVERY AND THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST MOVEMENT

The story of separation and inequality in religious history did not begin with the birth of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) denomination. It is a story that began at the inception of economic growth and development in America. Prior to slavery, the history of Black people in America, according to Lerone Bennett, Jr., began August 1619. Antony, Isabella, Pedro, and 17 other Africans were the first African American people to settle in Jamestown, Virginia, the first permanent English settlement in America.

These new settlers were not slaves. They were indentured servants who sold their services to planters for a stipulated number of years. Contrary to the prevailing history of Black America, the first black settlers in America were not victims of Racism or slavery.

⁴ Ibid., 33.

Lerone Bennett, Jr., reports that, in Virginia, then as in other colonies, the first Negro settlers fell into a well-established socio-economic groove that carried with it no implications of racial inferiority. That came later. However, in the interim, a period of forty years or more, the first Negroes accumulated land, voted, testified in court and mingled with Whites on a basis of equality.⁵ The first American settlers spent time together in all aspects of life. Lerone Bennett states,

Of all the improbable aspects of this situation, the oddest-to modern blacks and Whites is that White people did not seem to know that they were White. It appears from surviving evidence that the first White colonists had no concept of themselves as White people. The legal documents indentified Whites as Englishmen and /or Christians. The word White, with its burden of arrogance and biological pride, developed late in the century, as a direct result of slavery and the organized debasement of blacks.⁶

The newly established colonies economic situation at that time forced a change in the social status of African-American people. The worldwide demand for tobacco and cotton created the need for a larger work force. As a new territory, America was driven by greed, arrogance, and the need for cheap labor as it searched for ways to build up economic gains. This became the motive for seeking more and more revenue from the sale of tobacco and cotton.

C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya in their book *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, write, "The Atlantic slave trade and the institution of slavery in the United States were rooted in the pursuit of economic gain. The Africans

⁵ Lerone Bennett, Jr., *Before the Mayflower* (New York: Penguin Books, 1964), 35.

⁶ Ibid., 40.

were pursued, purchased, and enslaved solely for the cheap labor they could provide on farms and plantations. They were the economic tools for the system of chattel slavery that reduce human beings to forms of property."⁷ However, "the rulers of the early America were not overly scrupulous about the color or national origin of their work force."⁸

Attempts were made to enslave Indians, White men, and White women. However, the Indians' vulnerability to bacterial diseases borne by Europeans, according to Herskovits, was one of the reasons why the rulers of the early American colonies did not enslave Indians.⁹ Bennett asserts that it was difficult to enslave White men because they "were under the protection of strong governments; they could appeal to a monarch. White men, moreover, were White; they could escape and blend into the crowd."¹⁰ Because Africans were strong, inexpensive, visible, and unprotected, they became the race of people the rulers of early America choose to begin the process of slavery.

This act of "so-called" economic empowerment for the new established colonies was the beginning of centuries of dehumanizing treatment towards African-Americans. Bennett shares, "Heedless of the consequences, these men decided to base the American economic system on human slavery organized around the distribution of melanin in human skin."¹¹

⁷C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African-American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 237.

⁸ Ibid., 238.

⁹ Melville J. Herskovits, *Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), 91.

¹⁰ Bennett., 37.

¹¹ Ibid., 45.

No one considered the real costs of this form of economical relief. It was at this time that both blacks and Whites, who once mutually respected one another as fellow settlers, experienced a great divide. It was necessary for the men who ran the Colonies to take the following actions, “. . . creation of an ideology of Racism that justified the subordination of blacks. The second, flowing with and out of the first, was the destruction of the bonds of community between black and White servants, who constituted the majority of the population.”¹² Early colonist and Religious society used the Scripture as means to rationalize slavery. Lerone Bennett establishes this point by saying,

Astonishingly enough, the first rationalization for this policy was religion. Africans, it was said, were good material for slavery because they were ‘heathens.’ . . . it was decided that it was a Christian duty to bring heathens into the fold of Christian civilization so their souls could be cleaned and Whitened. Thus, in the end, God and profits were reconciled, as Virginia noted in its law of 1667.¹³

After coming to America, Africans were put on auction blocks and were sold as if they were animals. There were many schemes used to strip the Africans of their social heritage. They were given new names and were sold without any regards to family or tribal affiliation. Each slave had to go through what is referred to as a ‘breaking-in’ period. During the ‘breaking-in’ period, the Africans were taught ‘Pidgin English’ receiving new names and were socialized in such a way that forced the Africans to look

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., 46.

at themselves and others in a different manner.¹⁴ According to Wallace Charles Smith, every attempt was made to strip the Africans of their name, dignity, and culture.¹⁵

THE BLACK DISCIPLES OF CHRIST MEMBERSHIP

Historically, “The founders of the Disciples were basically of one mind in their personal attitude towards slavery. They opposed it unequivocally but did not accept abolition as an answer to the haunting question of what to do about it.”¹⁶

As a matter of religious history in the United States of America, some members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), as with most protestant denominations on American soil, practiced slavery in some form. Alexander Campbell wrote extensively about slavery in his column in the denominational newspaper, *The Millennial Harbinger*. In 1845 eight articles¹⁷ entitled “Our Position to American Slavery,” he tried to argue a position on abolition.

Regardless of his intentions, his reasoning amounted to a defense of slavery in the light of the New Testament witness. He placed great emphasis on the Apostle Paul’s insistence that every man should abide in the same calling wherein he was called (I Corinthians 7:20). Instead of hedging, he stated flatly that “the simple relation of master and slave: in concluding the series, he summarized his position in three propositions: (1) the master-slave relation is not “in itself sinful and immoral.” (2) Slavery, nevertheless, is: inexpedient” (3) No Christian community:

¹⁴ Ibid.,44.

¹⁵ Charles Wallace Smith, *The Church in the Life of the Black Family* (Valley Forge: Judson Press), 22.

¹⁶ Mark G. Toulouse, 193.

¹⁷ Ibid.

governed by the Bible can constitutionally and rightfully” make slavery “a term of Christian fellowship or a subject of discipline.”¹⁸

The prevailing obstacle for Africans during this period of history was found in the fact that there was no recourse for those who were enslaved. There were no people, legal systems, or institutions that Africans could appeal to challenge their inhumane treatment. There were no established grounds of solidarity from which the Africans could obtain strength to combat their forced status as slaves. Out of this context in history the story of the Black Church was born. It was established to provide a sense of cohesiveness, solidarity, and support for those who were enslaved and powerless.

There are two reasons for the establishment of the Black Church. First, the Black Church was created out of the inability of other churches or religious groups to be a support system for the slaves. Second, the Black Church came out of a need to meet the unique needs of the enslaved Africans generated from their circumstances in life. Smith says, "Phenomenologically, the black church in America developed out of the deprivation and oppression experienced by the slaves."¹⁹ Perry E. Henderson asserts that, “Slavery, Racism, and mutilated family relationships led to the formation of the black church.”²⁰ Cain Hope Felder declares, “It is no exaggeration to say that the Black church of America was born out of the inability of Whites to accept the full humanity and equality of Blacks.” Church was held to foster idea of freedom and personhood.²¹ Gayraud S. Wilmore says that the Black Church “was born out of the experience of being black and

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 22.

²⁰ Perry E. Henderson, *The Black Church Credit Union* (Lima: Fairway Press, 1990), 55.

²¹ Cain Hope Felder, *Troubling Biblical Waters* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1989), 102.

understanding blackness to be something connected with being held in bondage and needing to be free.”²² Dwight N. Hopkins stated, “The only liberated place that enslaved black folk controlled was the Invisible Institution, the foundation for the black Christian church.”²³

Although slavery was at its peak, “a number of Disciples leaders in the South saw no reason to quarrel with Alexander Campbell.”²⁴ James Loewen writes, “Black–White relations became the central issue in the Civil War, which killed almost as many Americans as died in all our other wars combined.”²⁵ History confirms that Black Disciples worshiped separately before the Civil War and afterwards. As the Disciples frontier movement migrated south, it was inevitable that they would be drawn into the institution of slavery. African-Americans were introduced to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as slaves. Only a few Black men and women as well as some Black Disciple preachers were free. Don Haynes, Eugene Randall, II., and Douglas A. Foster writes in the *Encyclopedia Stone-Campbell Movement*, “As was common throughout the country, when blacks (slave or free) became Christians, White members forced them to sit in separate parts of the building, usually in the back or in a balcony.”²⁶

²² Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 14.

²³ Dwight Hopkins, *Shoes that Fit our Feet* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 1.

²⁴ Toulouse, 194.

²⁵ James W. Loewen. *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything your American History Textbook Got Wrong* (New York, NY: Touchstone, 1995), 139.

²⁶ Douglas A. Foster, Paul M. Blowers, Anthony L. Dunnavant, and David N. Williams, *Encyclopedia of Stone Campbell Movement: Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, Christian Churches/Churches of Christ, Churches of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 619.

Rev. Raymond E. Brown writes in the article, *The History and Development of the African-American Disciples: And How This Impacted the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*, “The history of the African-American church cannot be recovered accurately at this date but from the scant fragmentary records available, a dim outline can be formed from what we have been able to discover.”²⁷

Most of the African-Americans within the denomination prior to the Civil War were in predominately White congregations.²⁸ The treatment of African-Americans prior to the Civil War in White churches was simply a reflection of society. Some of these treatments included forcing slaves to sit in the gallery instead of sanctuary. Some White churches would not even permit the slaves to enter the church sanctuary. “A White man would preach to them in the basement of the church building.”²⁹ In addition to White churches being perpetrators of the slave system, “White theology sought to control and make black people slaves in its doctrinal proposition.”³⁰ The theology and religious education taught to slaves by the White churches focused on the duty of obedience. Ephesians 6:5 traditionally was the passage of scripture selected to preach and read to the enslaved Africans, “Servants, be obedient to them that are your master.” Charlie Van Dyke, an ex-slave, asserts the following concerning his religious experience in a White church: “Church was what they called it but all that preacher talked about was for us

²⁷ Raymond E. Brown, *The History and Development of the African-American Disciples: And How This Has Impacted The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*, *Becoming the Church God Wants Us To Be: Call to Unity*, no. 9 (September 2008), 3.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Hopkins, 20.

³⁰ Ibid., 21.

slaves to obey our master and not to lie and steal. Nothing about Jesus was ever said and the overseer stood there to see the preacher talked as he wanted him to talk.”³¹

The disregard for Africans further distorted the religion being taught to slaves. Ex-slave Oliver Wendell Jackson says, “The White preacher he told us that a nigger had no more business in heaven than a hog had to be a preacher.”³² When some White churches that began to view slaves in a more humanizing way, they were relieved over freeing their souls while content with keeping the enslaved Africans' bodies in chains. There were probably fewer than 1,000 members in separate black churches.

By 1870, the denomination agreed the best way to offer support and encouragement to Black Disciples was by supporting Black evangelists. The American Christian Missionary Society, a mission of the Christian Churches, cooperated in supporting an African-American pastor, Rev. Preston Taylor, as one of their evangelists. “Taylor and Malcolm Ayers spoke often before the General Convention (White) asking for shared leadership with the White controlled missionary societies for the work among Blacks with little results. The interest of Whites was not sustained at any given time which led to certain resentment from Blacks.”³³

In 1917, Rev. Preston Taylor also a funeral director in Nashville, Tennessee, founded the National Christian Missionary Convention as a way to separate organizational life within the denomination. African-American Disciples found it

³¹ Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 213-214.

³² Ex-slave Oliver Wendell Jackson quoted in William C. Emerson, M.D., *Stories and Spirituals of the Negro Slave* (Boston: The Gorham Press, 1930), 35.

³³ Douglas A. Foster, Paul M. Blowers, Anthony L. Dunnavant and David Newell Williams. *Encyclopedia of Stone Campbell Movement* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 4.

necessary to organize a separate, but cooperating, convention because they knew there were no possibilities of Whites sharing leadership positions with them at that time or in their near future. Preston Taylor addressed the convention saying:

The White Church establishment has failed in their approach in developing Black leaders because of their lack of commitment. Blacks have been participating in the Disciples of Christ movement over 100 years, but have very little to show for it. Black congregation's number approximately 600, yet there is no mention of this in the latest Yearbook. Although there are six Disciples-related African-American schools, at this time none offered higher education. Furthermore, it is impossible to produce first class leaders with third class methods . . . this is why Blacks with a vested interest must organize for work. If the development of Black leaders does not become a major focus, the view and the outlook for them is a dim one.³⁴

By 1850, in the state of Illinois only one of the 104 Illinois Christian Churches was in Chicago. During the next half a century, a few churches were started there. In 1873, Jackson Boulevard Christian Church, an African-American congregation, was founded and is one of the oldest churches in the Chicago land area. In 1887, the Illinois Disciples of Christ organized the Chicago Mission Board. This cooperative board was established to support the founding of a Negro Mission that eventually became the Park Manor Christian Church.

By the early 1900's White supremacy groups were on the up rise with the Klu Klux Klan according to Loewen, "boasting over a million members."³⁵ He goes on to say, "It is almost unimaginable how racist the United States became ... Some small

³⁴ Ibid., 4.

³⁵ Loewen, 165.

communities in the Midwest and West became “sundown towns, informally threatening African-Americans with death if they remained overnight.”³⁶

ASIAN AND HISPANIC DISCIPLE MEMBERSHIP

Carmelo Alvarez writes the following in his article, “Hispanic Disciples in the US: Identity and Presence Frontier Mission Strategy and Hispanic Disciples.” The Disciples of Christ’s first mission in Mexico was initiated by the Christian Woman’s Board of Mission in 1895. The first Hispanic congregation in United States was located at Mexican Christian Church in San Antonio, 1899.³⁷ The number of Hispanic members and congregations are growing within the CCIW. It was not until the latter part of the Nineteen Century that this growth was recognized. However, in 1969, there were eighteen congregations, both Hispanic and bilingual. David Newell Williams writes in his article, “The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) A Reformed North American Mainstream Moderate Denomination,” “The dominant culture Disciples had assumed that Hispanics in North Americas would quickly assimilate to Anglo culture.”³⁸ At this time, there has been little effort to develop Spanish language resources.

In 1980, a National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship of the Christian Church Disciples of Christ) was established. Today, there are over 200 Hispanic congregations in

³⁶ Ibid., 166.

³⁷Carmelo Alvarez, *Hispanic Disciples in the US: Identity and Presence frontier mission strategy and Hispanic Disciples*, in *Becoming the Church God Wants Us To Be: Call to Unity*, no. 9 (September 2008), 14.

³⁸ David Newell Williams, *The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) A Reformed North American Mainstream Moderate Denomination*, in *Becoming the Church God Wants Us To Be: Call to Unity*, no. 9 (September 2008), 21.

the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) denomination. Many of them are bilingual. There are two congregations in the Region of the Christian Church in Illinois and Wisconsin. Spanish Christian Church is one of the older Hispanic congregations in the Region. Its founder and Pastor Rev. Rueben I. Cruz has a background in Hispanic television and radio. He and his sisters are very active members of the Region and denomination.

Asian American Disciples have also been subject to the attitudes and influence of the White culture of the denomination. In the late 19th Century, the Christian Woman's Board of Missions opened a mission to the Chinese in Portland, Oregon. By 1907, the women's movement started another mission in San Francisco. "Both missions were closed due to an anti-Asian hostility reflected in the Chinese Exclusion Acts."³⁹ By 1908, a Japanese church was organized. A wave of new immigrants from Asia to the United States began with the Immigration Acts of 1965. In 1979, the Asian American Disciples were formally recognized as a constituency group."⁴⁰

To be recognized formally as a constituency group in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) one must follow the following criteria:

The General Assembly, upon recommendation of the General Board, may recognize relationships of other organizations with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The relationship of such an organization shall be determined with reference to its purpose and function, and normally shall be through a general ministry. A request for such a relationship shall be referred to an appropriate general ministry for negotiation of the basis of relationship. The plans and activities of such an organization may be reported to the General Board through the general ministry with which it is

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

related. A review of such reports and the action of the General Board shall be included in the report of the General Board to the General Assembly. Where relationship through a general ministry is not appropriate or possible, the relationship may be through the Office of the General Minister and President.⁴¹

In 1996, the Asian American Disciples changed their name to the North American Pacific Asian Disciples (NAPAD) to be more inclusive.”⁴² As of 2008, there are four Asian congregations in Illinois and Wisconsin Region. Chicago Christian Church is the oldest Korean congregation in the denomination. It has been very instrumental in developing Korean pastors for healthy and vital ministry throughout the denomination.

THE CALL TO UNIFY

The role the Black Church has played in the history of African Americans in this country probably would have permitted no other person but a Black minister to lead African-American people during the Civil Rights Movement. As with many mainline denominations, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) lived through the Civil Rights era. “Until 1960, African-American Disciples had separate agencies and programs in almost every area of church life. After restructure of the denomination, a merger was worked out between the National Christian Missionary Convention and the newly restructured Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). This merger set the stage for all churches of color to become part of the General Assembly”⁴³ The Black Church, because

⁴¹The Design of the Christian Church <http://www.disciples.org/AboutTheDisciples/TheDesignoftheChristianChurch/tabid/228/Default.aspx> (accessed November 2008)

⁴² David Newell Williams, *The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) A Reformed North American Mainstream Moderate Denomination*, 22.

⁴³ Toulouse, 234.

its mission was holistic historically, has acted as a watchdog over policies that affected the livelihood of Black Christians.

During the sixties, many resolutions were passed at the General level of the denomination in protest of the merger. People were fighting and protesting for and against leadership and equality in the church. While at the same time in the South, people were marching and protesting for and against racial equality in the world.

Prior to this restructuring period, some of the churches were named “The Christian Churches” and others were known as the “Disciples.” During the restructuring period, the two names were joined forming “The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).” This symbolic call to unity has asked the Christian Church to look hard at what it means to be a church whose mission supports the work of social justice for all persons.

Past General Minister and President, the Rev. Dr. Richard L. Hamm, challenged the Church to be a more racially reconciled church. In his book entitled *The 2020 Vision*, he challenged the denomination to (a) become a mission church, (b) to start and found 1,000 new congregations and revitalize 1,000 existing churches by the year 2020, and to (c) become an Anti-Racist/Pro-Reconciling church.⁴⁴

By the early 1990s, the denomination had in place one mode of paying special attention to social justice issues. This was through the Reconciliation offering, taken by the church to help fund and support major social justice initiatives. In 1999, a resolution, “Many Members one Table,” was presented to the entire church at the General Assembly in hopes of furthering the conversation on race. However, the church saw a decline in its

⁴⁴Richard L. Hamm, *2020 Vision for the Christian Church (Disciples Of Christ)* (St Louis: Chalice Press, 2001), 45.

Reconciliation offering after its debut. In the fall of 1999, the Region Christian Church in Illinois & Wisconsin called the Anti-Racism Pro-Reconciling team into existence in Springfield, Illinois, at the Regional Assembly as a response to the mandate of the General Church at the 1997 General Assembly in Denver, Colorado. The objective of the team is to offer new possibilities of transforming people and the Church for racial justice. The goal of the team of the Christian Church in Illinois and Wisconsin is to respond to God's call to be a fully transformed, anti-racist, multicultural church.

The Region patterns its programming after the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) denomination with a deep commitment to renewing, revitalizing, and redeveloping congregations. The Region has said becoming anti-racist is a priority. They have dedicated 30% of every board meeting to anti-Racism training. Two of the Regional staff members have attended workshops and are trained in the anti-Racism and pro-Reconciling agenda.

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) denomination uses the "Crossroads Ministry Training Model"⁴⁵ for anti-Racism training with the General, Regional, and local congregations. This training offers the working definition "Race Prejudice +the Misuse of Power and Systems= Racism." It outlines Racism into three manifestations: institutional, cultural, and individual.⁴⁶ This has been an effective model in the Christian Church for over ten years.

⁴⁵ The Crossroads Ministry: An Interfaith and Community Based Anti-Racism Training Organization, Racine Wisconsin, 2.

⁴⁶Ibid.

The CCIW Region is organized into four areas: the South, the East, the West and the Urban/Metro areas. These areas are part of a de-centralized approach to area ministry and programming. Our ministerial staff includes Regional Minister and President, and two Associate Regional Ministers. Much of the work of Associate Regional Ministers revolves around building healthy relationships and providing unlimited resources to congregations, pastors, and laity. An Associate Regional Minister serves the Urban Metropolitan Area (UMA) which includes Chicago Area, Suburban Area, Rockford, Quad Cities, Brookfield, Janesville, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Bloomington-Normal, Illinois.

The UMA Churches are the most culturally and ethnically diverse area of our entire region. Within its boundaries, it is blessed with teachers, preachers, blue-collar workers, farmers, and retired laborers. Although the dominant racial identity is Caucasian, UMA membership includes about twelve percent People of Color. Over sixty percent of those persons who are living and attending church in the Urban Metro Area are college graduates and many possess advanced degrees. The UMA reflects a wide diversity of color, culture, and languages.

The Christian Church in Illinois and Wisconsin has a youth ministries program prayerful designed to “Encourage, Equip and Empower” the young people in the Region and in the world to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. This program has its beginning in the 1930’s when the Region began a program of youth summer conferences and mid-winter retreats that paved the way for strong leadership training and set the groundwork for today’s youth ministries programs. This program now includes (a) an

incredible outdoor ministry programs, (b) biennial youth assembly called Summit, and (c) quality mission opportunities.

CCIW youth participate in events throughout the year to help eradicate Racism. The Region has a summer camp dedicated to helping youth become familiar with ways of becoming anti-racist and pro-reconciling in the church and the world. The Region owns and operates Camp Walter Scott, an outdoor ministries facility located in the south and east corner of the state near Effingham. They also rent two campgrounds for youth who live in the northern and western parts of the region. In 2005, seven hundred youth attended the Region's Youth Summit, a biennial weekend gathering to promote unity. At this event, the Region offered two workshops and special trainings in the area of youth and reconciliation.

The youth who are participating in this model will change the future by working toward a structure that will improve racial understanding and provide opportunity for honest and authentic dialogue. Through this model of change, the voice of youth in this Region will offer a new and stronger attempt toward change in every area of the church, especially the area of racial understanding. Since the days of "Christian Endeavor,"⁴⁷ and mid-winter retreats, the youth have been listening and discerning ways to offer unity to the body of Christ by working to organize opportunities that will improve racial understanding and provide honest and authentic dialogue. Yes, there is resistance in the work towards improving racial understanding and authentic relationship. However, there has been good work done in this area as well.

⁴⁷ [http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/Christian Endeavor](http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/Christian%20Endeavor) (accessed November 2008).

OLD TESTAMENT BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

The frontier movement basked in a world of religious principles and different religious ideologies, each with its own standing creeds and denominational tests of loyalty for its members. The founders of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) felt no obligation to support creeds only Jesus as the Christ the Son of the living God (Matt. 16:18).⁴⁸ They acknowledged no document as authoritative in matters religious but God's book.

Ronald Osborn in his book, *The Faith We Affirm*, writes,

Disciple pioneers rejected the use of any creed as a test of Christian fellowship. They insisted on following the plain words of Scripture alone.” The founders believed, ‘creeds’ had replaced the simple assurance of biblical faith with complicated and abstract language detrimental to sound religion.⁴⁹

Mark G. Toulouse asserts,

In their phrase, ‘No creed but Christ’ early Disciples hoped to capture the centrality of Christ as an authority for Christian life and work, in their restoration mind set. They attempted to give life to their conviction that the church of Christ needed to stand separated from the methods and practices so evident in the corrupted social institutions of secular society.⁵⁰

Two of the denomination’s founders had their own opinions on the issues of slavery and segregation. Barton W. Stone denied any Bible warrants for slavery in the United States. He was not opposed to Blacks being subordinate to the White race. Alexander Campbell also opposed slavery, but it was very political. After viewing the

⁴⁸ Matthew 16:18 (NIV).

⁴⁹ Osborn, 33.

⁵⁰ Haynes, Randall II and Foster, 619.

break ups of other mainline denominations over this issue, he insisted in his 1845 *Millennial Harbinger* series, “Scripture did not condemn slavery but rather regulated it.”⁵¹

The founders asserted, “With the inspired Bible as their guide, they can ‘be complete, furnished completely unto every good work’ (II Tim. 3:16-17). To confess Christ and follow the Bible is a way that is right and cannot be wrong.”

These attitudes were not atypical to the period of that day, Paul R. Griffin writes,

The racist Christian ideas first planted by cultured Puritans during the early decades of the 1600s became the general standard of White Protestantism in the South. Puritans created racist dogma that became a blueprint for religious confessions and other ideologues throughout the antebellum era. While economic realities certainly influenced the rise of Racism and slavery in the South, theological notions that first raged across New England drifted southward and infected southern White minds in the period just before the Civil War.⁵²

As with most frontier preachers, the founders of this denomination wrestled with the Calvinist doctrine of “Double Predestination” which says, “God has chosen and elected those persons who will be “saved” and those who would be the lost before creation.”⁵³

The early Disciple of Christ preachers strongly opposed this Calvinistic view of interpreting faith. The Disciple leaders could not accept the idea of an “elect few.”⁵⁴

⁵¹ Toulouse, 57.

⁵² Griffin, 30.

⁵³ Osborn, 49.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 26.

“They believed that every sinner is capable of hearing the gospel, believing it and turning to Christ for repentance.”⁵⁵

During the frontier experience, the founders preached a message of “good news” and restoration. This message of grace was proclaimed to “Everyone who claims the promise of grace by being baptized, they insisted, has divine assurance of eternal life.”⁵⁶ Alexander Campbell describes the Bible as “the fountain and source of light and life, spiritual and eternal.”⁵⁷ The Bible was at the center of the life of the congregations. Congregants believed, “The authority of scripture testified directly to the lordship of Jesus Christ”⁵⁸

In recent years, the Disciples have moved towards “neo-orthodoxy” in expressing their theology.⁵⁹ This theology looks at Biblical doctrines, sin and salvation, including the areas of practicing theology and Biblical interpretation. In the Twenty-first Century, it is a widely held belief among educators, pastors, and theologians that scripture is not the only source of guidance regarding faith issues. Many outside sources are used to support religious views and assumptions.

Ronald Osborn believes the Disciples pick up the following four emphases that have grown out of their witness of the Bible and Christian tradition:

- A new seriousness about sin: We are self-seeking individuals who strive more for preference than justice. We cannot earn

⁵⁵ Ibid., 49.

⁵⁶ Toulouse, 49.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 57.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Osborn, 39.

our way out of this predicament. Rather in faith, we cast ourselves on the grace of God, and God grants forgiveness.⁶⁰

- A dynamic understanding of reprobation and grace: Christians see the judgment of the cross on every person. God's reprobation and grace are directed concurrently on each one of us. All of us need to confess our sin before God, yet at the same instant that God repudiates us because of our sins; God holds us in the grace of Christ and receives us as though we were righteous.⁶¹
- The universality of Christ's saving acts: The old understanding of election tended to limit the work of God in Christ to a relatively few people, the "elect." But just as the cross shatters our pretensions as individuals, so it does corporately as well. God established the unity of humankind in creation. So likewise in redemption, when the "Word became flesh." (John 1:14), that act of incarnation identified God with all humanity, the whole human race. On the cross, Christ "died for all" By the grace of God, all have been forgiven.⁶²
- Election to special service: Biblical election is not a matter of setting "us" against "them," but of calling us to give ourselves for them.⁶³

The pioneer founders' interpreted scripture was in alignment with the ways in which early pioneer colonist interpreted the Bible. Therefore, a historical stage was set for ways in which contemporary theologians and Disciple members continue to use those interpretations in some instances as a means to perpetuate Racism in church.

The misinterpretations of both Biblical history intertwined with American history has caused a great divide between People of Color and Whites. This division has been historically witnessed on every level of societal and spiritual existence and encounters.

⁶⁰ Osborn, 49.

⁶¹ Ibid., 50.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., 51.

(separate church buildings, schools, water fountains, seating arrangements, neighborhoods, banks, and governmental agencies).

Cain Hope Felder says, “Ancient authors of biblical texts did have a color consciousness (awareness of certain physiological differences), but this consciousness of color/race . . . was by no means a political or ideological basis for enslaving, oppressing, or in any way demeaning other peoples.”⁶⁴

The writer’s research shows that Whites and Blacks of the early colonial era were mutual in every way upon their arrival to America. They worked together, lived in community together and worshipped together. Lerone Bennett says, “There was to be sure, prejudice then, but it was largely English class prejudice which was distributed without regard to race, creed or color.”⁶⁵ It is the writer’s view that prior to slavery in America, the church and society both promoted a message that endorsed a universalistic view of God, the freedom and liberty of all persons and finally, a refreshing opportunity for settlers to be happy in their new home.

What happened and why? Why did groups find it necessary to use the Biblical interpretation as a means to demean and destroy the character of one group of people? America’s adoption of the model of slavery helped to strengthen its source for obtaining record growth and greed in its new territory. This growth and development that was enabled by the White men who ran the colonies left African- Americans with feelings of inferiority.

⁶⁴ Cain Hope Felder, *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1991), 127.

⁶⁵ Bennett, 40.

In the book *Slavery by another Name* Douglas Blackmon says,

Many indentured Whites servants were coerced into extending their labor contracts until death-effectively making them light-skinned slaves. Dispelling that confusion and ensuring dominant position of Whites in general-and Englishmen in particular-colonial legislatures, especially in Virginia, South Carolina, and later, Georgia, began in 1650s to systematically define residents by color and lineage. The intentions were twofold: to create the legal structure necessary for building an economy with cheap slave labor as its foundation, and secondly, to reconcile bondage with America's revolutionary ideals of intrinsic human rights.⁶⁶

James Loewen says, "Slavery's twin legacies to the present are the social and economic inferiority it conferred upon blacks and the cultural Racism it instilled in Whites, both continue to haunt our society. Unlike slavery, Racism is not over yet."⁶⁷ There is another part to the American legacy of slavery that stands to be challenged. It is that of Biblical interpretation.

Paul R. Griffin writes, "Puritans' central thesis was that God had not created humans equal. Human beings had been created hierarchically. This meant that there were levels of humanity ranging from highest to lowest."⁶⁸ He goes on to add, "Puritans twisted Christian ideas to prove that White superiority was not their own invention but God's eternal will and purpose for their society,"⁶⁹

Today, there are strong contradictory views in the ways in which historic religion informed and interpret Biblical narratives. Cain Hope Felder says, "In fact, the Bible

⁶⁶ Douglas Blackmon, *Slavery By Another Name* (New York: Anchor Books, 2009), 40.

⁶⁷ Lowen, 88.

⁶⁸ Griffin, 17.

⁶⁹ Ibid. 16.

contains no narratives in which the original intent was to negate the full humanity of black people or view blacks in an unfavorable way.”⁷⁰ Biblical narratives do not intentionally lead persons to negate the full humanity of any individual or groupings because of the color of his or her skin. Therefore, modern day racist attitudes and systems controlled this problem of Racism. Felder says, “Such negative attitudes about black people are entirely post biblical.”⁷¹

There must be a revisiting of both historic stories (Biblical and societal) so that every member of the Regional Church can claim the unity of the one God found in Deuteronomy chapter six. In addition, there must be those individuals who are willing to be vulnerable enough to work towards the de-programming of any post biblical erroneous interpretation of scripture. Paul Griffin writes,

Historians rarely risk proposing solution for contemporary solutions for contemporary social problems . . . it is important to recount how at the dawn of a new century, Whites and persons of color made a new story, a new beginning in American race relations, through a sincere and permanent idealitional and spiritual conversion from old racist ideas.⁷²

The writer of this paper challenges the Regional Church to walk toward what Paul Griffin would call, “holistic racial integration.”⁷³ This is coming to understanding what it would mean to have a “total transformation of the American mind.”⁷⁴ This integration would change the ways in which human beings, Christians, relate to one another in public

⁷⁰ Ibid., 127.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Griffin, 83.

⁷³ Ibid., 84.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

and private settings. This holistic racial integration would call for and move the nation toward racial reconciliation and equality.

Therefore, any premature conversations about the problem of Racism and its claims for reconciliation would no longer add value to this new level and model of conversation. These costly attempts and new models would ultimately produce a new vision of shared ministry and equitable authority both inside and outside the Church.

Since this paper is dealing with a model for improving racial understanding, the writer will seek to show how election and privilege lead one group on a quest for power, domination, and greed and show that the other group have suffered from pain, resentment, and the ill effects of Racism for generations. This paper will address the subtle and overt ways by which Biblical and American history have perpetuated racist behaviors and led to the misuse of privileges by doing the following: a) Interpreting the Biblical narratives such as the Old Testament “Curse of Ham” through Westernized Christianity created feelings of fragmentation that was used to brainwash, cause brokenness, and oppression towards Black people, b) Using the story of Ham to explore how an historic, hierarchal structure of economic greed, cultural dominance, and fear is still being practiced in today’s modern sacred and secular society, c) and finally, looking at the intentional subversion of African Americans in this country. The writer will offer a reflection of how they were stripped of their dignity and acknowledged as subhuman, and looked upon as three-fifths of a person due to the color of their skin based on the American law and Biblical rationale.

Interpreting the Biblical narratives such as the Old Testament “Curse of Ham” through Westernized Christianity created feelings of fragmentation that was used to brainwash, cause brokenness, and oppression towards Black people.

Early Biblical interpretation (for the purposes of this paper namely in America) has created fragmentation in the lives of Black people. Another effect of this fragmentation is seen in the ways in which African-Americans in this country have been looked upon as unintelligent, lazy, and incapable of excelling in life. These assumptions can be traced back to those who interpreted scriptures as saying, “Black” persons, who are descendants of Ham, represent the curse that Noah placed on his son. Stephen R. Haynes quotes John W. Blassingame,

Two conflicting slave stereotypes existed side by side in the antebellum mind. One was ‘Sambo,’ the docile, deferent, helpless, and ultimately harmless slave. The other was ‘Nat,’ the slave who might appear harmless but was in fact incorrigibly rebellious.

Sambo, ‘combining in his person Uncle Remus, Jim Crow, and Uncle Tom, was the most pervasive and long lasting of the ... literary stereotypes. Indolent, faithful, humorous, loyal, dishonest, superstitious, improvident, and musical, Sambo was inevitably a clown and congenitally docile.’ Blassingame’s vivid rendering of these stereotypes indicates the ways they are reflected in American readings of Genesis 9-11 before and after the Civil War.⁷⁵

Haynes asserts, “Enduring literary and cultural stereotypes outlived the institution of slavery to achieve permanence in American racial discourse.”⁷⁶ This discrimination is foremost an inappropriate way of viewing a universal God who loves all persons. This

⁷⁵ Stephen R. Haynes, *Noah’s Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery* (New York: Oxford, 2002), 10.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

interpretation raises questions about the universal message of salvation for all human kind. It voids any notion that God stands on the side of the oppressed. Therefore, Black/African individuals must suffer and live out consequences associated with this ‘so called curse.’ Some Whites were brainwashed into believing that Blacks were inferior to the White race.

Bennett says, “The first was the creation of an ideology of Racism that justified the subordination of blacks. The second . . . was the destruction of the bonds of community between black and White servants, who constituted the majority of the population.” There had to be a level of brainwashing that took place in order for this severing of bonds between Blacks and Whites relationships to occur. The error committed during scripture interpretation helped in the brainwashing efforts. Historically some scholars have looked at the Noah text from a proslavery perspective and have read into the text a spurious which is one that uses the text to legitimize slavery.

In Genesis chapter nine verses eighteen through twenty-seven the reader finds a story in which all humanity is rooted. Edwin M. Yamauchi writer of *Africa and the Bible* states, “. . . the earliest use of the curse of Ham to justify slavery in America dates to the 1670s. Some scholars argue that the curse of Ham played a relatively minor role until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the antebellum era prior to the civil war.”⁷⁷ Cain Hope Felder says, “Rabbis of the early Talmudic periods and the church Fathers, at times, used this text to denigrate Black people. Later Europeans adopted the ‘so-called’ curse of Ham as a justification of slavery and stereotypical aspersions about Blacks.”⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Edwin M. Yamauchi, *Africa and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2004), 28.

⁷⁸ Felder, *Stony the Road We Trod*, 129.

Stephen Haynes writes of early Jewish rabbinic thoughts,

The connection between Ham's sin and the physical appearance of his descendants is featured in a notorious compendium of rabbinic comment on Genesis 9: When Noah awoke from his wine and became sober, he pronounced a curse . . . upon the last-born son of the son that had prevented him from begetting a younger son than the three he had. The descendants of Ham through Canaan therefore have red eyes, because Ham looked upon the nakedness of his father; they have misshapen lips, because Ham spoke with his lips to his brothers about the unseemly condition of his father; they have twisted curly hair, because Ham turned and twisted his head round to see the nakedness of his father, and they go about naked, because Ham did not cover the nakedness of his father.⁷⁹

Haynes writes,

The modern association of Genesis 9 with black servitude is adumbrated in works by church fathers and rabbis alike. For instance, Origen (ca. 185-254) wrote that by 'quickly sink[ing] to slavery of vices,' Ham's 'discolored posterity imitate the ingnoblity of the race' he fathered. Augustine (354-430) saw the origins of slavery in Ham's transgression . . . Several notorious rabbinic glosses on the biblical texts and their relationship to slavery and racism are the subject of intense controversy.⁸⁰

Felder writes, "The great significance of Genesis 9: 18-27 is not that it contains the so-called curse of Ham, which technically does not take place at all."⁸¹ Claus Westermann says, "The whole of humankind takes its origin from them (Shem, Ham, and Japheth) . . . Humanity is conceived here as a unity, in a way different from the creation;

⁷⁹ Stephen R. Haynes, "Noah's Curse" 25 in Ginzberg, *Legends of the Bible*, 80. See David H. Aaron, "Early Rabbinic Exegesis on Noah's Son Ham and the So-Called 'Hamitic' Myth," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 63, no. (1995): 721-59.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 7.

⁸¹ Felder, *Stony the Road we Trod*, 38.

humanity in all its variety across the earth, takes its origin from these three who survived the flood.”⁸²

This type of Biblical interpretation has for centuries encouraged some Whites to treat Blacks as inferior persons in church and society, claiming this text as their basis for doing so. Paul R. Griffin quotes Rev. Cotton Mather,

Mather has been portrayed as one of the liberal friends of black people when such friendship was most dangerous. Yet his writings call African slaves ‘the miserable children of Adam and Noah who are the ‘Blackest Instances of Blindness and Baseness’ and the ‘most brutish of Creatures upon Earth.’ Going even further, he argues that ‘it is God who has caused ‘black people’ to ‘fall into a dreadful condition [of slavery] because they were created vassals of Satan.’⁸³

If the whole of humanity originated from Noah and his sons, why is there such separation and division between the cultures and ethnic groups? It has been the modern church’s interpretation of this narrative, which supports separation and division.

Stephen R. Hayes quotes, Eugene D. Genovese,

This case against the curse’s pivotal role in American proslavery thought has been articulated by Eugene D. Genovese, a leading scholar of Southern culture. Genovese concludes that manifest difficulties in applying Noah’s curse to racial thralldom limited its utility in the proslavery rhetorical arsenal. Genovese contends that ‘before the War the [Southern proslavery] divines had not rested their case on race. They had explicitly declared slavery scripturally sanctioned and ordained of God regardless of race. True, many diviners did invoke the Noahic curse and the supposed black descent from Ham in an ideology that took deep root among the people, but [some] . . . prominent divines, regarded it with

⁸² Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), 47.

⁸³ Paul R. Griffin, “Seeds of Racism,” 18. in “*the Negro Christianized*,” 2-3. Also see Cotton Mather, *Rules for the Society of Negroes*, reprinted in *Cotton Mather: A Bibliography of His Works*, vol. 3, ed. Thomas J. Holmes (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940).

suspicion since neither the Bible nor science demonstrated that the blacks descended from Ham.⁸⁴

A contemporary theologian who believes Noah curses Ham is Claus Westermann. Westermann's view is, "Ham, in effect, cursed and presumably with him not just Canaan, but all of the other descendants of Ham, that is, Cush, Egypt, and Put, as cited in Genesis."⁸⁵ Cain Hope Felder says, "Claus Westermann does help us to see that the ambiguity of the text can lead Bible interpreters to justify their particular history, culture and race by developing self serving theological constructs."⁸⁶

The term 'race' is a modern social construct. Cain Hope Felder quotes Cornel West by saying, "The very category of "race"—denoting primarily skin color—was first employed as a means of classifying human bodies by Francois Bernier, French physician, in 1684. The first racial division of humankind is found in the influential *Natural System* (1735) of the preeminent naturalist Carolus Linnaeus."⁸⁷

Historically Whites were not known as "Whites." When coming to America, they were classified as Englishmen/and or Christians. All persons were mutually treated the same. This modern construct of race is a phenomenon. Especially, since at the onset of slavery, it was not based on the color of one's skin. It was based on socio-economics. Both Whites and Indians had recourses; it was African-Americans who were enslaved

⁸⁴ Stephen R. Hayes, "Noah's Curse" 11 in Eugene D. Genovese, *A Consuming Fire: The Fall of the Confederacy on the Mind of the White Christian South*, Mercer University Lamar Memorial Lectures 41 (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1998,) 81.

⁸⁵ Westermann, 484.

⁸⁶ Felder, *Stony the Road We Trod*, 132.

⁸⁷ Cain Hope Felder, *Race, Racism, and the Biblical Narratives* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2002), 2.

because they according to colonist had bodies that could handle labor, and it was God's plan for them to live in this condition.

Felder writes, "... into the seventeenth century the idea persisted that the blackness of Africans was due to a curse, and that idea reinforced and sanctioned the enslavement of blacks."⁸⁸ Theologians and those who interpret scriptures must realize if indeed Ham is cursed, persons must remember that Ham is still connected to the family of Noah. He is not a stepson or adopted son. Ham is a biological son and this is a point that must not be overlooked nor denied. To do so would be a modern day example of those who use biblical interpretation to meet the needs of their specific group.

Those who interpret this Biblical narrative as a means to separate or to justify the harsh effects of slavery treats Noah and his sons as if they are not from the same family. Therefore, treatment of this text asks Biblical interpreters not to overlook the relationship Noah has with all three sons. Walter Rauschenbusch writes,

God is the common basis of all our life. Our human personalities may seem distinct, but their roots run down into the eternal life of God. In a large way, both philosophy and science are tending toward recognition of the truth which religion has felt and practised. The all pervading life of God is the ground of the spiritual oneness of the race and of our hope for its closer fellowship in the future.⁸⁹

It is time for the church, those who claim to be sisters and brothers of the descendants of all three of Noah's sons to move toward tearing down these prejudicially constructed of distorted Biblical interpretations and teachings. The writer affirms the need to expose the

⁸⁸ Felder, *Stony The Road We Trod*, 132.

⁸⁹ Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 186.

institutions that encourage such distortions of Biblical teaching. Historic heretical interpretation of scripture to justify any group dominating power over another in this or any other nation, and the writer believes it should be eliminated. This abuse of privilege by anyone who interprets scripture on behalf of others sends a message of bigotry based on distorted Biblical teachings.

This next section uses the story of Ham to explore how an historic, hierarchal structure of economic greed, cultural dominance, and fear is still being practiced in today's modern sacred and secular society.

Cain Hope Felder writes in the Dakes' Annotated Reference Bible, “. . . at Genesis 9:18-27 and so called great racial prophecy with the following racist hermeneutic:

All colors and types of men came into existence after the flood. All men were family line that of Noah who was White and in the line of Christ, being mentioned in Luke 3:36 with his son Shem... [There is a Prophecy] that Shem would be a chosen race and have a peculiar relationship with God [v.26]. All divine revelation since Shem has come through this line . . . Father of the great and enlarged races [v.27]. Government, Science and Art are mainly Japhetic . . . His descendants constitute the leading nations of civilization.⁹⁰

This false interpretation of the Noah text has caused a terrible separation within the family of God. The Bible is Christianity's primary guidebook for living. If the Bible is offered with such discouraging and overtly racist hermeneutical approaches, this sin and problem of racial prejudice and segregation will remain a reality in our churches and our world.

⁹⁰ Felder, *Stony The Road We Trod*, 8, 9, 36, 40.

Joseph Brandt says,

The fundamental, overarching message of the Bible is its emphasis on God's gift of justice and righteousness, of unity and community for all people. The human family is first and foremost the family of God. Racism and racial superiority are contradictory to all the fundamental biblical teachings and cannot be defended on the basis of Scripture. They are neither taught nor implied anywhere in the Bible.⁹¹

This story of Ham offers those in the world and church an opportunity to ignore the harmful effects of Racism. Those people who feel as if they are not directly affected by these issues are able to stand on the sidelines of life and continue to witness the brokenness felt by this spiritual and social evil. To some extent, the effects of slavery oppress all persons, Blacks and Whites. This social brokenness harms the lives of everyone it touches. No group is exempt from this social embarrassment.

After nearly two hundred years of ministry, the church continues to struggle to find reconciliation and wholeness in the areas of the sin of Racism and the walls that are erected around the perpetuation of this sin. The curse of Ham passage and the abuse of privilege in society and church illuminates what other theologians did not acknowledge in Genesis (9:18-27) A) The lack of recognition by some theologians addressing the misbehavior and inappropriateness of Noah's drunkenness and nakedness is a reflection of privilege to see or not to see what is relevant to a specific culture. This gives rise to some observations: A) There is a lack of clarity and definition of Noah's role as father, the head of the family. The integrity and pride that goes along with that title is in jeopardy. B) Ham unexpectedly finds his father drunk. He did not see this disgrace coming. There is nothing in the text that suggests or indicates any foul play on Ham's

⁹¹ Brandt, *Dismantling Racism*, 125.

part. Ham was not out of character. Noah was. C) What was Ham's misbehavior? D) Two brothers as beneficiaries. E) Canaan, Land of Promise or Pain?

Genesis 9:18-21

The writer of this paper challenges the readers to look deeper into the text at the innocence of Ham. A case is built against a son, who did not knowingly seek to harm and to look upon his father, in ways that would lead to disrespect and dehumanization. Ham is indeed a victim of circumstance. Persons, both Black and White descendants of those ancestors, who were participants in slavery, are oppressors and victims.

Ham's only sin was his mere entry into the place where Noah is sleeping off his drunken state. There Ham sees his father and is literally caught off guard by what he sees. At the very moment the son who looked upon his father's state of intoxication and felt feelings of confusion and embarrassment sought to find ways to give back to support his father. The best way to give back was to inform the brothers of their father's state.

Keep in mind the seriousness of Noah's behavior. Noah became drunk.⁹² Suppose this was Noah's first time in this predicament. The effects of having too much of the vines caused him to get drunk and to pass out. Therefore, Noah's own actions caused Ham to see him both drunk and naked.

The early Church fathers did not view Noah's behavior as not inappropriate. Some view his behavior as righteous.

⁹² Genesis 9: 21 (NIV).

Stephen R. Hayes writes,

According to Philo of Alexandria (ca. 20 B.C.E. -50 C.E.), Noah did not drink to excess but remained wise and virtuous man. Indeed, his very name means 'righteousness.' When prophesying about his sons, he spoke under divine possession and thus should be considered a prophet. Ham's fault was casting shame upon his father by holding some lapse of his up to laughter and scorn. Ham compounded his guilt by broadcasting Noah's failure to others 'outside' the family. In Philo's reading, Noah's sons represent the good, the bad, and the indifferent in nature. Ham is called the youngest because his temperament loves rebelliousness and defiance. Philo also connects Ham's name with 'heat,' a sign of vice in the soul.' 'Ham is vice in its quiescent state while Canaan is vice in the active state. The two represent a single object-wickedness. This, although he read Genesis 9 through the lens of allegory, Philo nevertheless remained within the orthodox interpretive paradigm established by the rabbis.⁹³

Michael E. Williams in *Storyteller's Companion of the Bible* writes, "Noah's nakedness is a recapitulation of the nakedness of the garden, he, too is defenseless; he too, has chosen a dangerous path that will lead to disaster."⁹⁴ The writer of this paper respects the views of early scholars, however disagrees with their views of Noah's righteousness in this narrative.

Genesis 9:22-24

There is nothing in the text that causes the writer to suspect foul play or disloyalty of Ham as a son. Ham was surprised and caught totally off guard by the sight of his father's drunken state. Therefore, Ham solicits advice and help from his two brothers in aiding him to provide a safe, helpful opportunity to cover his father's mistakes

⁹³ Stephen R. Haynes, 26.

⁹⁴ Michael E. Williams, *The Storyteller's Companion to the Bible, Vol. 1. Genesis* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 58.

and lessen his embarrassment. Williams adds, “The great patriarch, naked and passed out cold, is a shameful sight; he is completely vulnerable and weak, and for his son to see him compromises the father’s power in the family.”⁹⁵

The two brothers were both at an advantage over Ham. The older brother Shem whose name in Hebrew means ‘name’ or ‘good looks and warm hearted’ and the younger brother Japheth whose name means, ‘May God make wide’ or ‘enlarge.’⁹⁶ Ham told their brothers of their Father’s state of intoxication. They did not actually view this situation for themselves. They received the news second hand. However, no one talks about the advantage of Ham’s brothers in the story. They were away and came from a distance to cover their father’s nakedness. Ham had to see firsthand the dishonor of his father. The brothers benefited from something that they had no prior knowledge of without going through the same pain, humiliation, and embarrassment of their own father’s sin. It was actually Ham who should have received the blessing, instead of the oldest brother; because it was Ham who actually covered the father’s indignation by contacting the brothers to care for the father.

This writer equates the building of America with the part of the narrative that shows Ham’s brothers being praised for Ham’s discovery. Descendants of slavery are not direct recipients nor beneficiaries of all the hard labors of their ancestors. They are not recipients of any historical financial gains from the sale of cotton, tobacco, sugar.

In the book *Slavery by Another Name*, Douglas Blackmon writes, “Slaves were the primary workers at the earliest recorded coal mines in Alabama in the 1830s. These

⁹⁵ Williams, 58.

⁹⁶ The Freemans Institute, <http://www.freemansinstitute.com> (accessed February 2009).

men and women known to many as slaves, thousands of whom became skilled masons, miners, blacksmiths, pattern makers and railroad workers.”⁹⁷ By 1850, Southern railroads also became voracious acquirers of slaves, purchasing them by the hundreds and leasing them for as much as twenty dollars per month. “At the beginning of the civil war, railroads owned an estimated twenty thousand slaves.”⁹⁸

Stephen R. Hayes quotes Genovese,

Genovese’s challenge raises a series of questions regarding the role of Noah’s curse in antebellum America: How central was the “Ham myth” to the proslavery argument? Was it purely ‘popular,’ effective only at ‘the level of propaganda and mass consciousness?’ Should references to the curse in the works of proslavery intellectuals be read as concessions to popular credulity or palliatives for a guilty South conscience? Did most Southern blacks’ descent from Ham? Could the curse adequately sanction racial slavery without proving too much—that is, the possibility of white slavery? And, given the problems of applying Noah’s curse to racial servitude, why do we not find more explicit attention to ‘race’ in antebellum works that invoke the curse?⁹⁹

Ham should have been praised for his act of respect instead of cursed. Noah should have thanked him for choosing to seek assistance instead of allowing Noah’s incoherent state to go unnoticed. The writer asserts that the thinking of this text is more than Black and White. Readers should analyze the behavior and inappropriateness of Noah, the father and the patriarch of humanity, post flood. Is this the image that the postflood patriarch should uphold?

⁹⁷ Blackmon, *Slavery by another Name*, 46.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁹⁹ Stephen R. Haynes, “*Noah’s Curse*” 11 in Eugene D. Genovese. “*Letter to the author*,” 29 May 1998, in addition Theodore Dwight Weld, *The Bible against Slavery; An Inquiry into the Patriarchal and Mosaic Systems on the Subject of Human Right* (New York: American Anti-Slavery Society, 1838).

Noah moved Ham's brothers into a state of hierarchy over Ham. This hierarchical structure was not just written in this text. It has historically been the guiding principle for how this country was founded. Williams writes,

Noah's actions are the reason for the separation of his family; however much he would blame Ham, the sin is his own. Just as Adam and Eve chose poorly and were driven from the garden of God, so also Noah chooses badly and causes whatever harmony there may be in the new world to disappear again. The promise of Noah was that he would bring rest (5:29), but the world receives no rest at the hands of Noah.¹⁰⁰

In *Slavery by another Name*, Blackmon writes,

Dispelling that Confusion and ensuring the dominant position of White in general-and Englishmen in particular-colonial legislatures, especially in Virginia, South Carolina, and Georgia began in 1650s to systemically define residents by color and lineage. The intentions were twofold: to create the legal structure necessary for building an economy with cheap slave labor as its foundation, and secondly, to reconcile bondage with America's revolutionary ideals of intrinsic human rights.¹⁰¹

Ham's behavior was commendable. What did Ham really do in this narrative?

Some theologians say that he embarrassed his father. Felder says,

The crime is Ham's allowing himself to see the nakedness of his drunken father, Noah, without immediately covering him. In error, Ham leaves his father uncovered (according to Hebrew tradition, an act of great shamelessness and parental disrespect) while he goes to report on Noah's condition to Shem and Japheth, his brothers.¹⁰²

The founding fathers of this country, many who spoke out against slavery yet owned several slaves, are equated to the drunken father in this story. In the founders'

¹⁰⁰ Williams, 58.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 40.

¹⁰² Felder, *Stony the Road We Trod*, 131.

state of intoxication, the colonial life fell prey to the need for over indulgences of the founders. This behavior left men and women of all colors vulnerable to the consequences of their decisions to use human beings as slaves. “From the earliest years of the North American Colonies, Whites struggled to resolve vastly differing views even among slaveholders of the place and position of blacks in new society.”¹⁰³

It was Ham who saved his father from further embarrassment. Ham did what any other younger son would have done if they walked into the bedroom of a drunken father. They would have sought to help him into a better state of well being. It was the father in his drunken and inappropriate state who showed disrespect for the son. It was the father who perpetuated any segregation and marginalization experience by Ham.

Genesis 9:24-27

When Noah awoke out of his intoxicated state, Felder says, “The problems began.”¹⁰⁴ He pronounces a curse upon the descendants of Ham, Canaan. The curse Noah placed upon the descendants of Ham was in a drunken, incomprehensible state. This was done out of anger, embarrassment and guilt. Noah had no remorse for his sins. It was Noah’s own shame that caused this curse. Noah’s refusal to take responsibility for his own actions led to a historical focusing on Ham and his descendants.

The only way Noah could regain his sense of dignity was to project his bad behavior on to his son, Ham. Noah as father and head of the family tried to belittle his son’s intelligence and make him feel the same guilt felt by Noah in hopes that Ham’s

¹⁰³ Ibid., 39.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 131.

behavior would become the center of disappointment. Noah did not speak with feelings of contempt and disappointment.

Historically, the church pronounces this sin of Racism as God's way of punishing Blacks. This sin uplifted the country's economic system that produced a society of privilege, election, and wealthy Americans, whom Blacks have spent several generations serving. This act of service was not mutual in its understanding and it therefore caused pain and resentment. This service was forced labor, and many persons have spent their entire lives serving the privileged because they were told that God's laws required this service. How does the modern church retract such an erroneous Biblical interpretation, which has caused many persons such great pain and years of distress?

There have been many Whites who have stood against the social ills of Racism. Men and women across this Nation lost their lives for the sake of equality. Joseph Brandt says, "The awe-inspiring and unrelenting journey toward racial justice has been a part of the history of our country from its very beginning."¹⁰⁵ Brandt says,

The path to freedom is more than five hundred years long; it is the very same path so many of us are now struggling to maintain and widen. There is a great host of heroes and heroines who came before us, just as there is a great multitude of companions and co-strugglers who are with us now.¹⁰⁶

The father does pronounce the blessings upon the family. Noah cursed and condemned Ham without dealing first with his own failures and shortcomings. Noah disgraced and brought shame upon the family. He over indulged; he got drunk. In the

¹⁰⁵ Joseph Brandt, *Understanding & Dismantling Racism: The Twenty-First Century Challenge to White America* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 25.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

writer's estimation, Noah should have first taken care of his own transgressions before he could deal with Ham's. Nowhere in the narrative does it say that Noah offered any sacrifices on behalf of his behavior. Nowhere in the text does it point out any sorrow or feelings of remorse for Noah's drunken behavior. Does that mean that the father's behavior, drunkenness, and erratic behavior is acceptable? Does that mean the dehumanization experienced by African-Americans during slavery and after is acceptable? Does that mean separation of Blacks and Whites in the early settling of this country should be accepted as thing of the past and soon overlooked?

Both the ill effects of slavery and Noah's behavior should not be overlooked. Each incident must be seen for what it is—a breach in the original plan God has for all humanity. Repentance must be offered for both actions . . . Although slavery was not support by all White people, this country's Racism is still evident and there has not been a formal act of restitution toward African-Americans for such inhumane treatments. Other ethnic groups have been formally acknowledged such as Asians and Jewish cultures. Yet, African-Americans have been told to move on from such appalling and atrocious treatment. Michael Williams says, "The post-flood world seems little different from the pre-flood one, and God is right about human being: 'the thoughts of their hearts are evil from their youth.'"¹⁰⁷

Looking at the intentional subversion of African Americans in this country, stripped of their dignity and acknowledge as subhuman, and looked upon as three-fifths of a person due to the color of their skin based on the American law and Biblical rationale.

¹⁰⁷ Williams, 58.

God did not curse Ham. Noah did. Because this cursing did not come from Yahweh, and the curse is erroneous and hermeneutically incorrect since Noah was drunk and incomprehensible in his thinking. At best, Noah was hung over and irrational in his thinking. However, it was in that moment when Noah prophetically alienated, discounted, and tried to alter the destiny of his son, Ham, and his descendants.

Felder writes, “As I have suggested, the matter was far less complicated, for Ham violated the sacred rule of respect for his father.”¹⁰⁸ Felder uses the *Slavery and Abolition Journal of Comparative Studies* to describe a parallel. “Many of the difficulties within this passage find a solution once we allow the possibility that the original version of Genesis 9:18-27 referred only to Ham and his error and that a later version of the story motivated by political developments in ancient Palestine, attempted to justify the subjugation of Canaanites by Shem’s descendants (Israel) and those Japheth (Philistines)”.¹⁰⁹

The land of promise, possibilities, and prosperity is named Canaan. The land that flows with milk and honey where things flourish and grow is Canaan-land. The promise land where the children of Israel, the elected and chosen people of God, are to reside is Canaan. The children of Israel were sent to live in a place that was supposedly cursed.

God did not curse Ham. Neither did God curse Africans and African-Americans. The dilemma of this text is both Biblical and historical. This text as with many other texts must be carefully re-examined, reinterpreted and there must be another view of history and the Bible.

¹⁰⁸ Felder, 131.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

Throughout history the American protestant church and the government has been at the forefront of producing a message of separation. This language has been promoted not only in our churches but also in every institution.

John Jackson writes,

Racism is still ‘an American dilemma,’ but it is a dilemma that has been transformed by the structural changes remapping our country’s social hierarchies: the move from chattel slavery to sharecropping and agriculture to urbanization, the migrations from South to North, and the radical renunciations of blatantly racist social policies. We inhabit a new racial world, one where the racial masters and slaves have rewritten their positions on overt forms of race thinking.¹¹⁰

If history is not revisited, the world can never positively walk into the future that exemplifies reconciliation and unity. Society has tried to forget the ills of Racism and slavery. However, its feeble attempts have been like reoccurring nightmares from issues of “driving while black” to “the overly crowded prison cells filled with black men.” Society must confront history, because if it is not confronted, then it will soon be repeated.

Many African-Americans have asked for reparations for the ways in which Blacks have been tried and treated in this country alone. The civil rights movement that was birthed in the heart of the Black church has asked this country time after time to remove the oppressive rules, policies, and procedures that keep African-Americans as the permanent underclass. Since the 1960’s some laws have been changed on the books, but in practice the behavior of the oppressor is still experienced.

¹¹⁰ John L. Jackson, *Racial Paranoia: The Unintended Consequences of Political Correctness* (New York: Civitas Books, 2008), 191.

Blackmon says,

Blacks could be excluded from the enlightenment concepts that every man was granted by God individual freedom and a right to the pursuit of happiness because colonial laws codified a less-than fully human status of any person carrying even a trace of black or Indian blood. Instead of embracing the concept that regardless of color ‘All men are created equal,’ with no king or prince born to higher states than any other, colonial leaders extended a version of ‘royal’ status to all Whites.¹¹¹

This is similar to the country’s 1787 Act Three-Fifths Compromise

“The three-fifths compromise is found in Article 1, Section 2, Paragraph 3 of the United States Constitution. “representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned among the several states which may be included within this Union, according to their respective numbers of free persons, including those bound to serve for a term of years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three-fifths of all other persons.”

People of Color in this country have truly been marginalized. This racial oppression has been witnessed in the courtrooms of the law, the pews of churches, in the halls of academia, and on the bus. This racial separation has created walls of hostility and walls of judgment that must be broken down. Justice must take its place. It is time for the church and society to end this disturbing undercurrent found between Black and White relations.

NEW TESTAMENT BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

The Founders of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) were firm New Testament preachers. They preached a message similar of that of other frontier pastors “Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent and

¹¹¹ Douglas Blackmon, 40.

No creed but Christ, no book but the Bible, no law but love, no name but the divine.” The frontier settlers were passionate about promoting unity and reconciliation among the believers in the faith.

Reconciliation is the theme of the New Testament Epistle to the church at Ephesus. The author of this letter is by some scholars attributed to one of Paul’s coworkers or students. The writer of this paper has selected Ephesians chapter two verses eleven through twenty-two to show how the inner court, outer court, and the Holies of Holy were used as dividing walls of hostility between the Jews and the Gentiles in Biblical history. There are similarities of separation between African-American and White relationships and communities. This is witnessed in areas of Economic growth, Education, Politics and Religion. This brokenness must be healed.

For the purpose of this paper, the writer will ask readers to look seriously at the historical, Biblical and cultural organization of the temple and at the organization of the United States government. According to the Bible, the establishment of the temple housed the presence of God. The organization of Solomon’s ancient temple promotes an historic, hierarchal structure of elitism, economic greed and cultural dominance which still being practiced in today’s modern sacred and secular society. There was a distinction of class and offices within the walls of the temple that present barriers to certain groups. However, the temple offered a false sense of superiority and spirituality for those who were considered privileged and elected. Privilege and election caused an abuse of power within a political system and caused walls of separation and hostility within members of the Commonwealth of Israel. Cain Hope Felder asserts,

The writer of Ephesians transposes Paul's theology (theocentric focus on God's salvific activity in the Christ-event) into a Christology (the elaboration of the person and expiational work of Christ). Still, the writer of Ephesians represents accurately Paul's attitude about the scope of reconciliation and its significance regarding membership in the Household of God.¹¹²

In the Ephesians letter, the Apostle Paul describes Jesus as one who through sheer love of the cross for all persons will be the one who will come and break down walls of hostility between both the Jews and the Gentiles. The Old Testament prophecy confirms that one who will come from Jesse and offer the peace needed for reconciliation. The peace needed between the African-American and White cultures which lack understanding and relationship will need to move forward in the process of coming together for a common good. The good in this text is acceptance, hospitality, and true relationship with God and one another through Jesus Christ.

This is true hospitality says that God and Jesus Christ are in a different place than Christians in how they view relationships. In this text, Jesus has broken down the dividing wall of hostility and created a new way of being community together.¹¹³ The text shows Jesus' "transition from one man to one with those who control humankind."¹¹⁴ This text talks about the former state of the Gentiles prior to their connection with Jesus Christ.¹¹⁵ It speaks of their state of alienation from God's grace.¹¹⁶ That is having no

¹¹² Cain Hope Felder, *Troubling Biblical Waters: Race, Class, and Family* (Maryknoll: OrbisBooks, 1989), 162.

¹¹³ Margaret Mac Donald, *Sacra Pagina*, 243.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ephesians 2:12 (NRSV).

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

grace in God ¹¹⁷ and seen as strangers. ¹¹⁸ But now, those who are far are made near by the blood of Christ. ¹¹⁹ Jesus is seen as peace. ¹²⁰ Those who have been “strangers” and “aliens” are now invited to be part of the family of God through Jesus Christ.

There was an alienation between Jews and Gentile in the Ephesians text. However, there is also an alienation between those who came to this country by force. Joseph Brandt writes,

The United States is a race-based nation. It always has been and it still is now. Every person born in the United States or who is naturalized as a new citizen of the United States is given a racial identity and assigned to one of the six primary racial groupings: white, Native American, African American, Latino/ Hispanic, Asian American and Arab American. Each of these racial groups has been carefully and legally defined. ¹²¹

This paper is asking the Regional Church, which proudly claims itself as a New Testament church, to follow the claims of the New Testament: grace, reconciliation, and unity with God and one another through Christ. ¹²² In the text, the Gentiles are also created in Christ unto good works. ¹²³ Some of the good works, laws, groupings and other forms of identity creates separation and build walls of division and hostility. This was not Paul’s message to the church at Ephesus. Neither is this the message for the Regional church.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ephesians 2:13 (NRSV).

¹²⁰ Ephesians 2:14 (NRSV).

¹²¹ Brandt, *Understanding & Dismantling Racism*, 25.

¹²² Ephesians 2:8 (NRSV).

¹²³ Ephesians 2:10 (NRSV).

The Constitution of the United States was written to grant power to each branch of the federal government, some to States and reserving some power for the people.

Obrey Hendricks writes,

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt articulated the Four Freedoms that he believed were the inalienable rights of every member of human society: freedom of speech, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, freedom from fear. . . For Roosevelt, these rights were constitutional entitlements for every American, regardless of class, creed, or ethnicity.¹²⁴

Joseph Brandt states,

The Constitution of the United States was written exclusively for white people in the context of an explicit ideology of white supremacy. Moreover, all of the systems and institutional structures that were put in place under the shadow of the Constitution's wings were openly and explicitly designed...¹²⁵

He continues to add,

After the Naturalization Act of 1790 was passed, the Supreme Court was given the responsibility of defining who and what is a white person. Although the court occasionally modified its definition of a white person, allowing some immigrants of color to be redesignated as white immigrants, the primary precepts of the Naturalization of Act 1790 and the reserving of citizenship for white immigrants remained in effect for more than 160years, until the time of the civil rights movement.¹²⁶

The New Testament teaches that through the coming of Jesus Christ, all are able to have access to God. It is simple in the words of "John 3:16" "For God So loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son so that whosoever believeth on him should not

¹²⁴ Obrey M. Hendricks, *The Politics of Jesus* (New York: Doubleday, 2007), 306.

¹²⁵ Brandt, *Understanding & Dismantling Racism*, 25.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 18-19.

perish, but have everlasting life.”¹²⁷ Margaret MacDonald writes about Ephesians, “The teaching was intended to smooth away tense relationship between the Jews and Gentiles; thus the accomplished unity of Jew and Gentile is proclaimed.”¹²⁸

Nils Alstrup Dahl in the *Harper Bible Commentary* writes,

In verses 2:1-10 the former Gentiles are reminded of what they once were and what they have now become. The core sentence is verse 13: But now, in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off have come near by the atoning blood of Christ. The terms ‘far off’ and ‘near’ allude to Isaiah 57:19 but are as in Jewish usage, applied respectively to those who lack and those who have full legal and religious right as the people of God.¹²⁹

The historical, Biblical and cultural organization of the temple and the United States structure

To understand the depth of separation between the Jews and Gentiles the reader must have historical background information on the organization of the temple. It was the dream of King David to build a temple for God. However, this did not occur through David, but his Son Solomon. According to Paul Hanson, “Solomon, the first leader of Israel born in a royal house and assuming office by right of birth,”¹³⁰

There were three major temples in Biblical history, they were: Solomon’s, The Rebuilt Temple from Persia, and Herod’s temple. The temple was built as a place to hold the presence of God. Michael Coogan describes the temple as “a place of sacrifice and

¹²⁷ John 3:16 (NRSV).

¹²⁸ Margaret MacDonald. *Sacra Pagina: Colossians and Ephesians* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2008), 19.

¹²⁹ Dahl, *Harper’s Bible Commentary*, 1216.

¹³⁰ Hanson, 114.

pilgrimage.”¹³¹ Housed in each temple was the inner court, where Jews traditionally worshiped, the outer court, where the Gentiles traditionally risked their lives to convene and was the only place in which Gentiles could be found, and the Holies of Holy where the ‘Ark of the Covenant’ resided. A curtain separated each of these courts. Michael Coogan says,

The temple served mythologically as the link between heaven and earth, ritually as the locus of sacrifice and domain of the priesthood, economically as the national bank, and politically as the focus of many who sought the rule of heaven as opposed to the rule of Rome. The center of worship for all Jews in the formative period-either because they participated in it or because they defined their movement as an alternative to it.¹³²

Paul Hanson writes,

Solomon . . . looked from his lofty perspective down upon an inefficiently organized nation, located midway between a rustic clan confederacy and a modern nation . . . from the top down, he imposed on his nation a rational structure patterned on Egyptian and Phoenician models. The first stratum below the king was his personal cabinet, including finance minister, minister of trade and minister of forced labor. The next elite class consisted of the military nobility. Then came the land-owning aristocracy . . . And of course, the strata of his national social pyramid continued downward through the classes who well-being decreased...At the bottom was a growing class of impoverished whose increasing indebtedness was swelling the pool of indentured Hebrew slaves in Israel.¹³³

Michael Coogan says,

Priests and Levites were not the only figures in the Temple. Pilgrims could purchase animals for sacrifice from local sellers . . . The Temple itself consists of area of increasing holiness.

¹³¹ Coogan, 359.

¹³² Ibid., 358.

¹³³ Hanson, 115.

Outermost was the court of the Gentiles, which anyone could enter. Proceeding farther in, one reached the court of the (Jewish) women, the court of the (Jewish) men, and finally, the holies of holies-entered the high priest on the Day of Atonement. Participation in the Temple was open to everyone; women could make offerings, as Jesus' account of the widow's offering (Mark 12.42-43) and Josephus's narrative of Queen Helena of Adiabene, the proselyte, clearly indicate.¹³⁴

Although, the Gentiles were granted permission to enter the outer court of the temple without penalty, "they were not allowed to go into parts of the temple that were reserved exclusively for Jews because, they could be killed."¹³⁵ This non-acceptance of the Gentiles was once a reality for African-Americans, who historically were not allowed to sit in the main sanctuary of Whites. The balcony or gallery was where they sat for worship.

Verse Eleven:

"So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called 'the uncircumcision' by those who are called 'the circumcision'—a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands."¹³⁶

Earl T. Johnson writes in *Basic Bible Commentary* that the separation is caused by circumcision, the sign of the Old Testament covenant, which is no longer valid. There is no longer circumcision and uncircumcised.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ Coogan, 358-359.

¹³⁵ Walter F. Traylor and John H.P. Reumann, *Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians, Colossians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985), 50.

¹³⁶ Ephesians 2:11 (NRSV).

¹³⁷ Johnson, *Basic Bible Commentary*, ed., Vol. 24, 120.

In Ephesians 2:11-12: “Gentiles” is a name that the Jews gave to those who were not believers in the Jewish faith, those who did not subscribe to the principles of the law. In this passage of scripture, there were those who did not show themselves to be part of God’s covenant by circumcision, “having the foreskin removed.” However, the Jews were those who had been circumcised.¹³⁸

Margaret Mac Donald says, “The Paul of Ephesians 2:11 speaks as the representative of Jewish Christianity. His main interest is in proclaiming the achieved unity of Jew and Gentile in the church.”¹³⁹ MacDonald goes on to say,

The ones being called the uncircumcision by those called the circumcision, in the flesh made by hands; this phrase recognizes the importance of male circumcision as acknowledgement of tension between social groups. The alienation once experienced by Gentiles involved being labeled as outsiders by Jews (or perhaps Jewish believers who were opposed to Paul’s view on Gentiles and Jewish Law). They were called ‘the uncircumcision.’¹⁴⁰

Mac Donald asserts, “Ephesians 2:11 stresses the physicality of circumcision.”¹⁴¹ The blood of Christ has created the new reality. Once alienated from the people of God, the Gentiles have been brought near.”¹⁴² Author Brad Braxton writes,

As Paul reminds the Gentiles and the Jews that the covenant promises were never meant to be the sole possession of the Jews, so too African-Americans, in our quest for liberation, must remind the American power structure that the ‘promises of America’

ought not be the sole possession of white people. . . The dominant culture has implicitly indicated that it really believes the promises

¹³⁸Ibid., 112.

¹³⁹ Mac Donald, 243.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 241.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴²Ibid., 243.

of America to be the sole possession of white Americans; otherwise there would not be such pressure put on African Americans to be like them. Certain white Americans ('Judiazers'), who have a narrow view of the scope of the promises, have told African-Americans ('Gentiles') that the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness (the 'covenant promises of Abraham') really only belong to white people. Thus if we want to enjoy the benefits of these promises we will have to become white (i.e., 'we have to Judiaze')¹⁴³

Verse Twelve:

"Remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world."¹⁴⁴

Earl T. Johnson writes, "Gentiles also are no longer alienated from God as they were at one time. They are not aliens and refugees in God's city anymore, but are now full citizens with equal rights and privileges."¹⁴⁵ Johnson lifts up the notion in the scripture of being "alienated from the commonwealth of Israel excluded from citizenship." He goes on to say, "The writer uses a political term which refers to aliens or outsiders who are not citizens of a city (2:19)¹⁴⁶

Skin color has always been the dividing line between Blacks and Whites.

Joseph Brandt says, "Originally there was only one racial category for people of color:

¹⁴³ Brad Braxton, *No Longer Slaves: Galatians and African American Experience* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2002), 90-91.

¹⁴⁴ Ephesians 2:12 (NRSV).

¹⁴⁵ Earl T. Johnson, 120.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 113.

‘nonwhite.’ He claims, the idea of nonwhite people in a ... race based nation has never changed.”¹⁴⁷ Margaret Mac Donald writes,

The underlying assumption in 2:12 is that the Gentile believers are now part of the commonwealth of Israel, In other words, the writer of Ephesians seems to be equating Israel with the church. Paul realizes Israel exists outside the group, but on the other hand he speaks of the inherited privileges of the Israelites (Romans 9:4) and of the failures of Israel who pursued righteousness based on the Law to attain righteousness.¹⁴⁸

Ben Witherington, contends, “What does Paul mean by Israel here? Does he mean non-Christian Israel? Or is he thinking of Jew and Gentile united in Christ? It would seem odd that he would call the latter “the commonwealth (*politeia*) of Israel,” which suggests a political entity.”¹⁴⁹

Brandt says, “Despite the many legal and structural adjustments and cultural changed, the momentum of this past history still controls the lives of nearly everyone in our society.”¹⁵⁰ Those who are Christians and are in the church have an opportunity to alter this momentum. The church has Jesus, who has broken down the walls of hostility between all groups and has paved a way for reconciliation in the Church and in the world.

¹⁴⁷ Joseph Brandt, *Understanding & Dismantling Racism*, 19.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 242.

¹⁴⁹ Ben Witherington, III, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2007), 258.

¹⁵⁰ Joseph Brandt, *Understand & Dismantling Racism*, 25.

Verse Thirteen

“But now in Christ Jesus you who were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”¹⁵¹

The temple was divided by walls and curtains. Only Jews were permitted to go and worship God within the inner walls of the court of the sanctuary. Those who were once in the outer court of the temple now have the opportunity through Jesus blood to access to God through relationship with God. Traylor states, “But now in Christ: these words contain the author’s theology in one brief phrase . . . the phrase is an emphatic contrast to the former state of the Gentiles. The change is effected in Christ, as always in Ephesians.”¹⁵² Mac Donald says,

This passage moves from describing the past existence of believers (then) to a celebration of their present circumstances (now). The blood of Christ has created a new reality. Once alienated from the people of God, the Gentiles have been brought near. The blood of Christ is most likely a reference to the cross of Christ, Ephesians 1:7 redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of trespasses.¹⁵³

Ben Witherington writes,

Through Christ’s blood (i.e., bloodshed in death) even Gentiles have been brought near to God. 1.7 and its reference to Christ’s blood should be compared. Christ’s death on the cross is seen as an atoning sacrifice, the chief element which is the shedding and applying of the blood in the appropriate place and manner.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Ephesians 2:13 (NRSV).

¹⁵² Traylor, 48.

¹⁵³ Mac Donald, Pagina, 243.

¹⁵⁴ Witherington, 258.

PHEME PERKINS WRITES,

Despite the Jewish cast to its depiction of Gentiles, the “now” does not speak of Gentiles joining the commonwealth of Israel. Instead, Ephesians uses the expression “brought” near by the blood of Christ” (v.13) Ephesians in 1:7 spoke of redemption in Christ’s blood as forgiveness. More immediately, readers have been reminded that they are exalted in the heavenly places with Christ (2:6). This set of spatial terms would lead the audience to conclude that they have been brought near to God rather than to the commonwealth of Israel as such.¹⁵⁵

Verse Fourteen:

“For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is the hostility between us.”¹⁵⁶

Skin color remains a primary dividing wall in the Church and society.

Institutional racism enables structures and institutions to serve exclusively the dominant group. Brandt says, “Through these systems and institutions the production of white power and privilege and the subordination and exploitation of our nation’s people of color.”¹⁵⁷ These systems and dividing walls are witnessed in the nation’s economy, educational opportunities, political systems and religion.

Joseph Brandt says, “All institutions in a society are interrelated and interconnected. Each institution is part of a larger group of similar institutions called a ‘system.’”¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵PHEME PERKINS, *The New Interpreter’s Bible: Ephesians, ed. Volume Eleven* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 398.

¹⁵⁶ Ephesians 2:14 (NRSV).

¹⁵⁷ Brandt, *Understanding & Dismantling Racism*, 146.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

The economic inequity is seen through those who qualify for loans and credit. People of Color in America are still at the bottom of the list of those who qualify for mortgages. The Educational system with the number of public and private schools, and who is accepted, and are able to attend. The political system, how the governmental offices are governed and who have access to agencies and judiciary means. The Religious system, this includes who and where one goes to Church. Reumann writes,

While a few would understand the phrase as referring to the curtain that divided the Holy of Holies from the rest of the Jewish temple, most see here a reference to the temple wall which separated the court of the Gentiles from the inner areas. Gentiles could be killed if they entered the portions of the temple reserved exclusively for Jews. Those reserved portions did in fact include the inner temple, where God was thought to dwell. The dividing wall thus expresses the twofold division from God.¹⁵⁹

At the death of Jesus Christ the separation and alienation of the Gentiles was eliminated. The dividing wall of hostility, which represents a division from God and between the Jews and Gentiles was terminated. It was Christ's death on the cross that abolished the law and reconciles the Jews and Gentiles into a state of unity. Once Jesus died on the Cross, the curtain in the temple which separated the Holies of Holy from the rest of the temple and the Gentiles was 'rent' and torn down. This tearing of the curtain eliminated the separation between God and humanity. The African-American and White cultures are in the Twenty-First century the modern groups who need to accept the ancient act of Jesus as a modern answer for five hundred years of hostility and separation. There are no longer two separate worlds in Christ. There is one humanity.

¹⁵⁹ Traylor, 50.

Nils Alstrup Dahl in the *Harper's Bible Commentary* writes,

Ephesians 2:14-18 explains how Christ through his atoning death brought about the transfer from 'far off to nearby.' The text has a poetic flavor and alludes to the messenger of peace in Isa. 52:7 as well to this peace for the far and the nearing Isa.57:19. Christ is himself identified with the peace he has brought and announce. This peace means unification of the Jewish and non-Jewish parts of humanity, creation of 'one new human being.' Reconciliation of both parts with one another and with God: in one body and from access to the Father "in one spirit."¹⁶⁰

Ben Witherington says,

All this has happened because Christ himself is our peace (v.14) It does not say that he gives peace but rather he is our peace, probably echoing Micah 5:5. By this Paul means that Christ himself in his own person and death is the destroyer of all hostilities between Jew and Gentile.¹⁶¹

Mac Donald writes,

The dividing wall literally means 'the dividing wall of the fence' most likely the partition that separated the Gentiles from the inner courts of the Jerusalem Temple. Moreover, the writer of Ephesians may have understood the breaking down of the Temple walls as a vindication of Paul's message concerning the salvation of the Gentiles.¹⁶²

She goes on to write, "The dividing wall is closely associated with the Jewish Law and some have argued that the "wall is actually a reference to the Law and not to the partition that separated the Gentiles from the inner courts of the Jerusalem Temple."¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 1216.

¹⁶¹ Witherington, 259.

¹⁶² Mac Donald, 244.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 244.

Alsip states,

As Gentiles within the church in this context are regarded as representatives of the entire non-Jewish world, the Jews in the church may represent all Israel, as in Romans 11. Ephesians, however, never mentions the fact that some Jews rejected Christ, nor does it say anything about how the addresses relate, or ought to relate, to Jews in their own midst or in Jerusalem.¹⁶⁴

Johnson says,

Jesus Christ has broken down the wall between Jews and Gentiles, which was symbolized by the wall that kept Gentiles out of the Jerusalem Temple. He has broken down the fence, which the law put around the Jews. He has destroyed the hostility that existed between God and humanity. Through his blood, his sacrifice on the cross, Christ has brought peace.¹⁶⁵

The phrase ‘the Blood of Christ’ is a reference that the reconciliation of the Gentiles was brought about by Christ’s death on the cross. “The writer’s understanding is clearly a sacrificial one here. As it was the custom of sacrificing the blood of cattle and other animals at the altar in order for the Jews to draw close to God. Christians are made righteous by the blood Christ shed on the cross.”¹⁶⁶

Racism and the battle over inequity are still raging in the Twenty-first century. Brandt says, “Racism is only half of the story. The other half is the tireless and heroic resistance on the part of racism’s victims. No matter how bitter the history of violent oppression of racism, there is a better side.”¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ Alsip, *Harper’s Bible Commentary*, 1216.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 120.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 114.

¹⁶⁷ Brandt, *Understanding & Dismantling Racism*, 25.

For Jews and Gentiles the law has been the curse by which this group experienced separation. For African-Americans and Whites it has been Racism.

Joseph Brandt says,

This awe- inspiring and unrelenting journey toward racial justice has been a part of the history of our country from its very beginnings. For every act of racism there have been equal and opposite actions of resistance. Through the courageous efforts of millions of sisters and brothers who lived before our time, a broad path of freedom was cut through the jungle of racism. The path to freedom is more than five hundred years long; it is the very same path that so many of us are now struggling to maintain and widen. It is important to know that we are not the first on this path, and we are not alone.¹⁶⁸

Brad Braxton says,

If African-Americans are redeemed in Christ from that curse, then we are free both to be heirs of all the promises of life in America. Because of the Christ event African-Americans must tell the dominant society that no longer are the phrases 'African American' and 'heir of the American promises' mutually exclusive.¹⁶⁹

Johnson writes, "Gentiles now co-exist as members of one family, brothers, and sisters in one household of God. Together they make up a living house which is where God may dwell and truly be worshiped."¹⁷⁰ The Ephesians writer indicates in verse 14 that the division and hostility that have always existed between the Jews and the Gentiles throughout history have now been abolished in Jesus Christ because he is our peace. The writer of Ephesians maintains that Gentiles and Jews are enabled to be at peace because they are no longer two separate peoples pulling and tugging at each other, but now like

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Brad Braxton, 92.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 120.

one person with two separate but joined parts.¹⁷¹ Johnson notes that when the author of the Ephesians letter says, ‘Christ has destroyed the dividing wall of hostility,’ he uses graphic language to draw a picture of the difference Christ makes in the lives of those who were once at war with one another spiritually. The Greek word for *dividing wall* is *phragmos*, and in its most basic sense refers to a fence, a railing, or a hedge used for protection (Isaiah 5:5; Matthew 21:33)¹⁷²

Verse Fifteen

“He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace,”¹⁷³

Johnson asserts,

The writer of the text had a second meaning given to the word wall which was that it stood for the Jewish law and the commandments and ordinances. (2:15) Since Rabbis later referred to the law as a ‘fence’ erected by God to keep the Jews from Gentile contamination, it may be that the writer is reminding his readers that the demands of the law are also broken down in Christ.¹⁷⁴

Witherington states, “The function of the Torah was to make Jews a people set apart for God, but also it gave them protection from intruders and interlopers since someone wanting to live as a resident alien in the land would have to live by the rules of the Torah.”¹⁷⁵ Mac Donald says, “The reference to peace in the previous prepares the

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 115.

¹⁷² Ibid., 116

¹⁷³ Ephesians 2:15 (NRSV).

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 117.

¹⁷⁵ Witherington, 260.

way for the mention of reconciliation. Peace is also a theme in the hymn in Colossians (1:15-20), which describes the process of reconciliation.”¹⁷⁶ Earl S. Johnson, Jr., contends,

In verse 19 that the writer changes symbols from the wall of hostility to the mixed metaphor of the city of Christ, the household of God, and the living temple. At one time, the distinction was drawn so severely between Jews and Gentiles that the Gentiles must have felt as though they were aliens and refugees in the city of God, even though the Jews were commanded to treat strangers and sojourners with special care (Deuteronomy 10:18-19; 27:19; Job 31:32). ‘In Ephesians 2:19,’ the writer makes it clear that such distinctions do not exist in the church of Jesus Christ.¹⁷⁷

Verses Sixteen through Eighteen:

“And might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father.”¹⁷⁸

Mac Donald offers this as a model,

The absence of a direct reference to the physical body of Christ implies that the one body (comprised of the unity of Jew and Gentile) should be understood as a metaphor for the church (Ephesians 1:23; on the notion of “one body” as a means of describing the church.¹⁷⁹

She also says, “The clause most likely refers to the whole of Christ’s saving work.” She adds, “Moreover Gentiles now have access to the divine favor Jews alone once

¹⁷⁶ MacDonald, 246.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 118.

¹⁷⁸ Ephesians 2:16-18 (NRSV).

¹⁷⁹ MacDonald, 247.

enjoyed.”¹⁸⁰ Wirtherington says, “Paul’s point in any case is that Gentiles no longer have any sort of second-class status. They are full equals with Jewish Christians as God’s united people.”¹⁸¹

Verses Nineteen-Twenty

“So then you are no longer stranger and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.”¹⁸²

Wirtherington writes, “Paul really did believe that the work of the apostles was foundational to the church, especially to the church of both Jews and Gentiles united.”¹⁸³ Mac Donald writes, “There are good arguments in support of both interpretation.”¹⁸⁴

Johnson writes, “In verse twenty, the writer continues with the metaphor of the house and the church. The church of Jesus Christ is God’s new house build upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.”¹⁸⁵

The work of the Church is to continue to build on the message of Jesus Christ remembering that all were once strangers and aliens. Now as Christians the church must

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 248.

¹⁸¹ Wirtherington, 261.

¹⁸² Ephesians 2:19-20 (NRSV).

¹⁸³ Wirtherington, 262.

¹⁸⁴ MacDonald, 249.

¹⁸⁵ Johnson, 119.

embrace those who are not like us in color, culture, economic background, and educational level. However, the church must perpetuate a message of unity.

Verse Twenty- One and Twenty-Two

“In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place.”¹⁸⁶

Johnson writes,

Verses 21-22 complete the comparison of the house and the church by picturing the church as a building that is a living being, an organism in which God lives. He builds on the Old Testament idea that the place in which God is worshiped is the house in which God dwells (2 Chronicles 5:14, Psalm 122:1) He also uses a physiological model: The house of God is like a human body, intricately put together with tissue, bones, and joints. For him the church is no longer a dwelling place, a building, or a steeple; the church is a living body; it is people. (1Peter 2:5; 4:17)¹⁸⁷

Mac Donald, writes, “The physical temple was traditionally understood as a dwelling place for God, but now a spiritual temple exists in the shape of a community of believers.”¹⁸⁸

PHEME Perkins writes,

Ephesians depicts the temple as in the process of being built up.”¹⁸⁹ Perkins says, ‘Despite the differences in their origins, both Jewish and Gentile believers are reconciled to God through Christ.’

¹⁸⁶ Ephesians 21-22 (NRSV).

¹⁸⁷ Johnson, 120.

¹⁸⁸ MacDonald, 250.

¹⁸⁹ Perkins, 402.

Both are brought into the body of Christ and have the same Spirit. They have a common foundation and belong to a building designed to be held together by one capstone. While diversity of origins is no barrier to coming into the church, it is not an excuse for a building of clashing architectural styles! Thus the emphasis on unity in Ephesians rejects the possibility of God's people being divided into multiple sects.¹⁹⁰

Reconciliation between the Jews and Gentiles did not suggest that either group would take on the characteristics of the other. They became Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians.

Brad Braxton says,

Our unity in Christ does not consist in an amalgamated or undifferentiated identity. Rather we are 'one in Christ' because each Christian individual and each Christian community has a relationship in faith with Christ, and these faith(ful) relationships with Christ are meant to ensure that we relate to each other, in the midst of our many differences, with mutuality and equality. We can only see the truly miraculous mature of Christian unity when the social distinctions that define us are present and even accentuated. An analogy from music may be helpful. Harmony is the cooperative union of different voices. The various vocal parts must maintain their distinctiveness, even as they unite, if harmony is to exist."¹⁹¹

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

Theology in the church gives its members permission to search the scriptures for insight into the truth about God and God's relationship with humanity. Theology also asks that life experiences be part of any assessments, motivation, and determining factor about how God is involved with humanity. Theology allows the church to move from being closed-minded and self-centered to a community of believers who push beyond the boundaries and individual cultures that continue to separate one group from another.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 403.

¹⁹¹ Braxton, *No Longer Slaves*, 95.

Owen C. Thomas and Ellen K. Wondra writes,

In the New Testament, the church is depicted as the eschatological community, the fellowship of the end-time, in which the powers of the age to come are already at work, and that looks forward eagerly to the return of Christ and the fulfillment. Therefore, the church is not fully what it is essentially. It must be understood in light of what it is called to be, in light of the goal toward which it passes in hope. Furthermore, the church in history lives under the sign of the cross. The power of God is present in the church, but it is manifest only to the eye of faith.¹⁹²

The writer has chosen Liberation Theology, (Black, Latin -American and Womanist) and Christian Theology to undergird the writings of her paper. The writer will examine four aspects of Liberation Theology as it relates to God as liberator, Jesus as liberator, human liberation and the church as liberator. Liberation Theology is at the heart of Christian Theology. James Hal Cone, in *A Black Theology of Liberation*, says, “It is a rational study of the being of God in the world in light of the existential situation of an oppressed community, relating the forces of liberation to the essence of the gospel, which is Jesus Christ.”¹⁹³ Liberation Theology gives voice to those who are voiceless and it focuses on God’s activity in the world. Cone says, “Christian theology has a theology of liberation ingrained in it.”¹⁹⁴

Owen C. Thomas and Ellen K. Wondra writes,

Christian Theology is the interpretation of human experience in the light of the central categories, images, and ideas of Christian faith. . . Such interpretation arises out of the languages and symbols,

¹⁹² Owen C. Thomas and Ellen K. Wondra, *Introduction to Theology*, 3rd edition (Harrisburg: Morehouse Publishing, 2002), 260.

¹⁹³ James Hal Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1990), 1.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

cultures and worldviews, social and political systems, and understandings of social location.¹⁹⁵

There can be no good Christian Theology if it is not grounded with the poor and those who are oppressed. God was on the side of the oppressed. God liberated those who were on the bottom of the social order.

James Hal Cone states,

Unfortunately, American white theology has not been involved in the struggles for black liberation. It has been basically, a theology of the white oppressor, giving religious sanction to the genocide of Amerindians and the enslavement of Africans. From the very beginning to the present day, American white theological thought has been 'patriotic,' either by defining the theological task independently of black suffering (the liberal northern approach) or by defining Christianity as compatible with white racism (the conservative southern approach).¹⁹⁶

James Cone's claim,

Jesus Christ is the norm of black theology presupposes a form of 'perspective realism.' In the context of his work, perspective realism is the belief that truth is seen from a particular perspective realism is the belief that truth is seen from particular points of view and speculation does not contribute to an accurate perception of the truth. In other words, truth is not a product of the human mind.¹⁹⁷

Other Theologians have similar views as James Cone as it pertains to God's solidarity with the oppressed people. Jacquelyn Grant shares Cone's view of Jesus. Grant says, "Jesus is black and female rather than male."¹⁹⁸ This is a view James Cone assumed

¹⁹⁵ Thomas, Wondra, 6.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 4.

¹⁹⁷ Frederick L. Ware, *Methodologies of Black Theology* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2002), 46.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 49.

early in his theological career. Cone is Christologically grounded in his Theological insights.

In *Methodologies of Black Theology*, Frederick Ware quotes Womanist theologian Jacquelyn Grant by saying,

These events are representative of God's liberating actions on behalf of the oppressed and the inspiration for them to seek freedom. After dispensing his maleness, she contends that the significant events of Jesus Christ were for the liberation of the least, the poorest of the poor, the most oppressed among the oppressed in the United States.¹⁹⁹

James Evans explains,

God's blackness in terms of what he claims are two of God's principal attributes: impartiality and partiality. . . According to Evans, God is impartial in the 'God is the universal parent of all humankind and . . . all people [are] created from the same dust.' God values God's creatures, God wills justice. In situations of injustice, God becomes partial.²⁰⁰

The Story of Noah in the Old Testament and the Epistle of Ephesians in the New Testament describes Jesus' sense of mission and 'liberation' to all humankind. J. Deotis Roberts asserts, "The resurrection of Jesus means that all oppressed peoples become his people. Herein lies the universal not implied in the gospel message of Jesus."²⁰¹

When writing about Christian Theology and Liberation, the historical writings and stories on slavery comes to mind. In slavery God was a God who fought on behalf of those who were considered chattel and treated as subhuman. Throughout history, God has

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ James Evans, *We Have Been Believers: An African-American Systematic Theology* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1992), 67.

²⁰¹ J. Deotis Roberts, *Africentric Christianity: A Theological Appraisal For Ministry* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 2000), 45.

been present with and for those who struggled with humiliation, oppression and lack of connection.

Owen C. Thomas writes, “God’s activity in the world would be human history.”²⁰² An ancient example is Israel’s slavery. God chose Israel from the oppressive culture of Egypt to be a witness to the world. Israel found favor in the eyesight of God.

The writer will examine three aspects of Liberation Theology as it related to God as liberator, Jesus as liberator, and human liberation.

GOD WHO LIBERATES

Paul R. Griffin, wrote,

After their emergence from the English Reformation and throughout their struggles to establish their religion over Anglicanism, the Puritans used the doctrines of sin, predestination, covenant, and creation to argue that God has favored them by placing a special act of grace, redeeming them from the original sin and placing them at the top of hierarchy of humanity. Such claims were not unique in Judeo-Christian history; they go back to the ancient Hebrews. But the Puritans of New England were the first Christians to use them to build a theological argument that God had created black people innately inferior to other human beings.²⁰³

Throughout history, this line of thought has been the foundation of Western Christian Theology. Mainline protestant denominations are dedicated to the calling of all persons to a life of faithfulness in God through Jesus Christ. Daniel Migliore contends, “Theology arises from the freedom and responsibility of the Christian community to

²⁰² Owen C. Thomas and Ellen K. Wondra, *Introduction to Theology* (Harrisburg: Morehouse Publishing, 2002), 32.

²⁰³ Paul R. Griffin, *Seeds of Racism in the Soul of America* (Cleveland: United Church Press, 1991), 1.

inquire about its faith in God.” He goes on to describe the work as “a continuing search for the fullness of the truth of God made known in Jesus Christ.”²⁰⁴

Daniel Migliore writes in *Faith Seeking Understanding*,

The church is always threatened by a false unity that does not allow for rich inclusive participation on the part of all persons, regardless of background and color. Theology exists to keep alive the quest for the whole gospel that alone can bring unity without loss of enriching diversity, community without loss of personal or cultural integrity, peace without compromise of justice. Theology must ask not only what the true gospel is but also what is the whole gospel?²⁰⁵

The emergence of Black Liberation Theology gave People of Color the opportunity to find legitimacy in their oppression. It gave them the strength to acknowledge their degradation and find some connection with a God who is on the side of the oppressed. Black Liberation Theology centers on Jesus Christ while lifting up the reality of the Black human condition. (Socio-Political, Religion, Economic)

Cone says, “Theology can never be neutral or fail to take sides on issues related to the plight of the oppressed.”²⁰⁶ “Liberation theology is not one of individualistic means. One embodies a ‘communitarian’ point of view. Communitarian according to James Cone is ‘Unity.’ The message of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is one of ‘Unity’ and reconciliation.

Liberation Theology embraces the thought of a God who is active on behalf of the oppressed. James H. Evan writes, “African-American Christians have not only claimed the impartiality of God, they have also affirmed what appears to be a contradictory claim,

²⁰⁴ Daniel Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding* (Grand Rapids: Michigan, 1991), 1.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 12.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

namely, that God is on the side of those who are oppressed in society.”²⁰⁷ He goes on to further state,

They recognized in the Exodus story and in the writings of the prophets of Israel a God who takes sides in human conflict. Not only does God render judgment on those who oppress (Amos 8:1-14), but God actually exercises what Latin American liberation theologians have referred as a ‘preferential option for the poor.’ This affirmation, like the previous one, must be understood in relation to its social and political context.²⁰⁸

Liberation theology gives Blacks and other People of Color a God who they believe stands on their side, who understands their humiliation and then offers solace. It is through Liberation Theology that we see and sense God liberating oppressed and degraded people. When Liberation theology is being discussed, one must dialogue extensively about God being a liberator of those who are oppressed.

Evans writes,

Black Christians assert that God was on their side because they lived in a society where European-Americans made absolute claims on the divine legitimization of their dominance. Or, to put it another way, the oppression of African-American was often justified by implying that they were abandoned by God. However, the reality of the experience of God among African-American Christians convinced them that not only were they not abandoned by God, but that God had taken their plight as God’s own.²⁰⁹

Owen C. Thomas writes,

Liberation theologians also have radically criticized the traditional doctrine of God as patriarchal and oppressive. They argue that the attributes and titles used for God are drawn from human hierarchies of power and can be used to give ‘divine’ blessing to human social arrangements that involve domination and marginalization . . . Let us recall that the doctrine of God depends entirely on what God is revealed to be, especially on God’s self-disclosure attested in the Bible. We have

²⁰⁷ Evans, 69.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

God-God gives divine self to us-only in divine revelation. It may be that, based on this revelation, we may be able to perceive God's presence and activity throughout the creation and human experience, but this is secondary and dependent. What is primary is that we are given to know God only by grace and revelation, by God's meeting us through the testimony of Bible and church. God is not simply at hand, at our disposal. It is not possible to be neutral and detached in relation to God. We can be related to God only in a way that determines our existence, that is, only in faith.²¹⁰

The writer believes Racism is a spiritual and theological problem that seeks a solution. The writer disagrees with Thomas' assessment of God through the eyes of Liberation Theology. It appears to the writer that God is a God who is more than the God read about in the Bible, and talked about from a church pew.

Evans asserts,

African-American Christians expressed their faith that God had not abandoned them in their struggle for liberation. In essence, God's partisanship was a tangible sign of God's care for the lowly. In traditional theological terms the partisanship of God is the political and historical manifestation of God's love. God's love for the world and for humanity is a key theme in the biblical witness. In the Hebrew Scriptures, God is seen as protector, nurturer, guide, and provider. In this New Testament God's love is crystallized in the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (John 3:16). The love of God is the magnetic field that holds the created order together. It is the glue of the universe.²¹¹

James Evans quotes J. Deotis Roberts,

In the formative stages of black theology as an academic discipline, black theologian J. Deotis Roberts argued that the theme of God's love was as important as that of God's freedom. This love, according to Roberts, 'heals the brokenness between [people], it overcomes estrangement, and it brings people together-it reconciles.'²¹²

²¹⁰ Thomas and Wondra, 90.

²¹¹ Evans, 70.

²¹² Ibid.

The consistent theme in Israel history and in the Black church is God's love and justice for the oppressed. The oppressed has a loving God who moves into their circumstances and sets at liberty those who have been dehumanized, marginalized and poor.

JESUS WHO LIBERATES

In the New Testament Jesus is displayed as one who was born to liberate those who were oppressed. The great theologian Howard Thurman categorizes Jesus in three aspects: a) Jesus was a Jew from Palestine b) Jesus was poor and c) Jesus was a member of the oppressed ministry. He says, "These conditions shaped the religion of Jesus."²¹³

Evans argues,

"The Israelites of Jesus' time had only two options in relation to Rome. The first was nonresistance, in which the oppressed Jews could either imitate the dominant group and assimilate their culture and traditions, or simply withdraw, as far as possible, from the oppressive Jews could either and be content with occasional displays of contempt. The second option was resistance, which manifests itself most often in armed struggle. Thurman believes, however, that the religion of Jesus represents and alternative form of resistance."²¹⁴

As one looks at Black theology and Liberation, Jesus is seen as "liberator of oppressed humanity."²¹⁵ Jesus is understood by some as one who is referred to as a liberator of oppressed humanity, freeing them from sin and other social structures.

Howard Thurman uses Luke 4:18-19 to describe Jesus' ministry. "The Spirit of the Lord

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Evans, 84.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 85.

is upon me, to preach good news to the poor. . .” Evans says, “Jesus’ objective was not to redeem society but to save people from sin.”²¹⁶ Luke 4:18-19 was spoken to bring hope to those who were experiencing oppression during those Biblical times.

Obrey Hendricks writes,

Church leaders, especially those on the religious right, nowadays have reduced Jesus’ gospel of justice and liberation to a narrow doctrine of personal piety that focuses solely on individual sins, while ignoring the much more deadly sin of gross social injustice. The prophet Isaiah admonished us, ‘seek’ justice/rescue the oppressed’ (Isaiah 1:17). This is a clear call for radical change in the destructive and self-seeking political structures that dominate the world today.²¹⁷

Jesus is viewed in the Howard Thurman’s book, *Jesus and the Disinherited* as one who is familiar with separation. He writes, “Through the intervening years, a religion of the powerful and the dominant, used sometimes as an instrument of oppression, must not tempt us into believing that it was thus in the mind and life of Jesus.”²¹⁸

Racism is a spiritual problem because it separates members of the “Body of Christ” from God and the plan God has for all humanity. It robs members of the chance to know the unique characteristics of people of other cultures in a quest to see what it means to be the whole people of God in and through Jesus Christ. Being the whole people of God means putting away one’s own personal wants and agendas to join in unity with others and live in and through the common good. Jesus is who unifies the story of Christianity.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 87.

²¹⁷ Hendricks, 253.

²¹⁸ Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1976), 13.

Howard Thurman says, “It is impossible for Jesus to be understood outside of the sense of community which Israel held with God ... The Christian Church has tended to overlook its Judaic origins, but the fact is Jesus of Nazareth was a Jew from Palestine.”

Jesus was poor and was not a Roman citizen. Thurman says,

The striking similarity between the social position of Jesus in Palestine and that of the vast majority of America Negroes is obvious to anyone who tarries long over the facts. We are dealing here with conditions that produce essentially the same psychology. There is meant no further comparison. It is the similarity of a social climate at the point of a denial of full citizenship which creates the problem for creative survival. For the most part, Negroes assume that there are no basis citizenship rights, no fundamental protection, guaranteed to them by the state, because their status as citizens has never been clearly defined. There has been for them a little protection from the dominant controller of society and even less protection from the unrestrained elements within their own group.²¹⁹

This quote from Thurman is important because it shows a side of Jesus which connects with humanity. Jesus was a member of an oppressed community in which he was not held in high esteem by the Roman government. He was a participant of the oppression of Palestine’s social and political context. Jesus’ liberation spread throughout the Temple.

Obrey Hendricks writes,

Jesus was giving voice to the people’s sentiments that the priests has previously suppressed by invoking the weight of their office. In effect, Jesus was letting the cat out of the bag . . . But most important, Jesus’ action gave a voice to the voiceless. Publically and powerfully he articulated the people’s unspoken anger and resentment, not just to vent their feelings, but to empower them by giving them the inspiring thrill of hearing their own thoughts and sentiments spoken by someone just like them.²²⁰

²¹⁹ Thurman, 34.

²²⁰ Hendricks, 124.

The emergence of Black liberation theology gave People of Color the opportunity to find legitimacy in their oppression. It gave them the strength to acknowledge their degradation and find some connection with a God who is on the side of the oppressed. Black Liberation theology centers on Jesus Christ, while lifting up the reality of the Black human condition. (Socio-Political, Religious, Economic)

Cone says, “Theology can never be neutral or fail to take sides on issues related to the plight of the oppressed.”²²¹ “Liberation theology is not one of individualistic means. One embodies a ‘communitarian’ point of view. Communitarian according to James Cone is ‘Unity.’ The message of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is one of ‘Unity’ and reconciliation.

The historic vision of the founders was one that stressed unity and reconciliation. Liberation theology gives Blacks and other People of Color a God who they believe stands on their side, who understands their humiliation and then offers solace.

HUMANITY’S PLACE IN LIBERATION

The writer believes Racism is a spiritual and theological problem that seeks a solution. It is sin, which continues to separate and divide the Church. Racism is a theological problem because at a 1963 meeting at the Montreal World Conference, William Stringfellow, an American Episcopalian, contradicts Racism in sacramental understanding by saying,

But does the life of the Church in each place assert the dignity of the human person as God’s gift? . . . We are shamefully divided by racial prejudice and discrimination . . . In Christ, there is no

²²¹ Ibid.

defense or excuse for the willful continuation of groups, church meeting or exclusive. We therefore call upon Christians in their local churches to show the marks of Christian discipleship whatever the cost.²²²

Racism is a spiritual problem because as members of the “Body of Christ”

Racism separates us from God and the plan that God has for all humanity. It robs us of the chance to know the unique characteristics of people of other cultures in a quest to see what it means to be the whole people of God. Being the whole people of God means putting away one’s own personal wants and agendas to join in unity with others and live in and through the common good.

Deborah Flemister Mullen, says,

There is no room for Racism or racial idolatry in the body of Christ! Where Racism persists in the churches and is embraced as an expression of faith, Christians must mobilize to restore good faith and order to the whole people of God by publicly confessing Racism as sin and renouncing racist belief and behaviors as evil.²²³

Racism is painful. It is debilitating. It is a direct offense to God, who as creator, sustainer, and parent calls us to be children of God. The children of God must be a spiritual, life giving, and reconciled people who live daily in the midst of a sin that seeks to divide and conqueror.

Owen C. Thomas offers,

The doctrine of humanity has always been the implicit base point of Christian faith, not only because human beings ‘have’ Christian faith focuses on the human person Jesus, who is the Christ. Thus

²²² Jefferey Gros, “*A Sharing of Gifts and Struggles in God’s will and our unity*,” in *Ending Racism in the Church*, ed. Susan E. Davies and Sister Paul Teresa Hennessee, S.A. (Cleveland: United Church Press, 1998), 123.

²²³ Deborah Flemister Mullen, “*Baptism as Sacrament of Struggle and Rite of Resistance*,” in *Ending Racism in the Church*, ed. Susan E. Davies and Sister Paul Teresa Hennessee, S.A. (Cleveland: United Church Press, 1998), 71.

the doctrine of God is fulfilled in Jesus, who is the 'image of the invisible God' (Col.1:15), and is elaborated by applying elements of the human experience analogically to God (anthropomorphism). Furthermore, human beings receive the revelation of God and understand themselves as creatures and as sinners who have been redeemed by God. The doctrine of humanity has three parts: humanity as created in the image of God, as sinner, and as redeemed.²²⁴

The church encourages its membership to seek wholeness in relationships with others as well as in practicing the spiritual disciplines of prayer, meditation and scripture reading. The writer asserts that often the oppressed have received relief from the pressures placed upon them by their oppressors after spending time in prayer and Scripture readings. The Bible offers humanity a place to find relief, justice, and liberation from its oppressor. It displays an image of liberation and freedom from the oppressors.

The Bible suggests that God is fighting on behalf of those who are heavy laden and are the downtrodden.

Owen C. Thomas says, "The first and most fundamental thing that the Bible says about human beings is that we are creatures, part of God's creation, and thus dependent on God for our being and continued existence."²²⁵ The Bible is seen as the document that liberates and interprets a story of freedom for African-Americans. Israel's experience in the Exodus story shows oppression and suffering "the more they multiplied."²²⁶ It appears to the writer that the more African slaves brought to the new colony, the more oppression and suffering they experienced. James Evans writes,

²²⁴ Thomas and Wondra, 133.

²²⁵ Thomas and Wondra, 134.

²²⁶ Evans, 40.

African slaves constructed their own Scriptural world on three pillars of biblical interpretation. These strands of African-American interpretation were responses to the major biblical defenses of slavery. They were the means by which African-Americans read the Bible with 'new eyes.' They were also forged in the context of the struggle for liberation. Virtually every intellectual activity of African-Americans was related to their condition of oppression and their desire for freedom. Thus the hermeneutical perspective that they brought to the Bible was inseparable from their determination to live as full human beings in the presence of God.²²⁷

The Bible and its interpretation is important for African-Americans. It is the guidebook for daily living and it holds a comparative and reflective story of a group of people who were marginalized and oppressed in common ways.

Evans writes,

African-American Christians have seen and understood the Bible as a whole text, at the center of which is the Exodus myth, the cornerstone of the Hebrew model of interpretation. They have exercised a theological imagination that, like a prism, first focuses and then refracts the biblical text... to put it another way, African-American Christians have generally refused to dismember the biblical text without first remembering the biblical story.²²⁸

Walter Rauschenbaush writes,

God is the common basis of all our life. Our human personalities may seem distinct, but their roots run down into the eternal life of God. In a large way both philosophy and Science are tending toward a recognition of the truth which religion has felt and practiced. The all pervading life of God is the ground of the spiritual oneness of the race and of our hope for its closer fellowship in the future.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid, 46.

THE CHURCH AS LIBERATOR

Racism is visible in the church and it must be acknowledged and eradicated. The church has put on a façade in its dealing with racism. The writer believes that this façade continues to denote the fact that the church should be at the forefront of organizing and banning any racial slurs and activities, which could potentially destroy the preachers, teachers, leaders, and the youth of the church. Individuals are free to act any way they so desire. They can believe what they want, but as unified members of the Body of Christ, they need to, at all times, reflect love, compassion and integrity toward all humanity. The church is called to be a place of liberation and wholeness for all humanity.

This spiritual and theological problem continues to divide a church that seeks wholeness. There have been trainings and round table discussions and financial contributions made to support the topics of race relations, yet these actions have not produced an authentic plan for change. Without organizing and strategizing, the church will not be able to attack systems of polity and institutional structures, making hopes of eradicating Racism futile.

The impact of Racism on both the culture and church has hindered any real progress at what it means to recognize and experience the beauty and creativity of God. The culture has said that the days of Racism are over because People of Color are able to use the same drinking fountains, sit in the front of the bus, and stay overnight in hotels. Racism is visible in the church and it must be acknowledged and eradicated. The church has put on a façade in its dealing with Racism.

The writer believes that this façade continues to denote the fact that the church should be at the forefront of organizing and banning any racial slurs and activities, which

could potentially destroy the preachers, teachers, leadership and the youth of the church. Individuals are free to act any way they so desire. They can believe what they want, but as unified members of the Body of Christ, they need to, at all times, reflect love, compassion and integrity toward all humanity. (The Love of Jesus)

James Cone writes, “When we romanticize our culture (or beliefs), we idealize that culture as if it were perfect and does not stand in need of correction from the gospel.”²²⁹ Christians who were born into this imperfect world always stand in need of correction from the gospel. Christian theology, which encompasses Western and Black Liberation theology, must offer to us the grounding and correction needed from the gospel. It must give Christians the chance to ask the questions and take the steps that will offer liberation to everyone.

Mark G. Toulouse says,

The founders assumed they could preach Christ and people could accept Christ and that would be that. Little evidence indicates serious reflection about how their understandings of Christ and of the nature of the church might be colored by their own experiences as Americans. Nor did they seem to reflect about how portions of the gospel they preached might in fact be inappropriate for people who lived in different cultures and who had different experiences. Many disciples assumed that when “savages” became ‘Christians’ the end result would be that they would look like good solid American citizens.²³⁰

The writer asserts that in the writing of this statement, there is still a level of elitism and privilege found in racist attitudes that have trickled down even to the 21st Century. The writer says that every culture has been tainted by the sin of Racism. “Whites must not idealize their culture to such a degree that they forget the many

²²⁹ Cone, *Black Theology*, 22.

²³⁰ Toulouse, 194.

oppressions and injustices through which it was forged.”²³¹ Humanity and the Regional Church must look through its own cultural lenses and quickly identify the ways in which it has oppressed itself and other cultures. The church must sincerely repent and turn from this oppression if the church is going to acknowledge and live by the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

Joseph Brandt writes,

There is one gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the gospel of liberation offered to all those who identify themselves as oppressed. When Jesus dealt with upstanding, righteous, educated religious upper-class people of his day his main goal was to help them understanding their sickness, their brokenness, and their enslavement.²³²

Today the church promotes a gospel that says the oppressed are not doing enough or praying enough to be on the same level as ‘real’ Christians. The church has also taken a more paternalistic view towards those persons whom they think are oppressed. The gospel asks all people to look at themselves and see the oppression, brokenness, and enslavement in their own lives. It is out of that self-reflection that one will be able to see the brokenness in the lives of others, and together they all stand in need of healing, mending, and care from Jesus Christ and his message to all humanity.

Dwight N. Hopkins says, “A contemporary black theology of liberation must start from the perspective of achieving justice for the ‘least of these’—God’s poor.”²³³ He goes on to state that, “Theology affirms and challenges how we act at the intersection

²³¹ Curtis Paul De Young, *Coming Together: The Bible’s Message in an Age of Diversity*, 1995, 33.

²³² Brandt, 25.

²³³ Hopkins, 4.

between God's liberating practice and humanity's faithful practice with God. It arises from life or human activity."²³⁴

Twenty-first Century Disciples have done the complete opposite of what the founders asked of us: to focus on the essential things and "let unity be our polar star." The world's economic disasters are plaguing the three manifestations of the church (General, Regional and local). The church has continually focused its attention on membership, funding, and programming to make us competitive with other denominations without taking the time to focus on what is at the heart of the gospel message: Jesus' love for us all. The church must be at the forefront of its mission of reconciliation and health. It must declare that its mission is found in the saving acts of Jesus Christ who calls us all to be one.

The world is not able to turn the sin of Racism into wholeness, acceptance, and a true call to community because the church must handle those things that are spiritual and theological. The community of faith and the body of believers must first grapple and toil with the gospel that calls and challenges us to unity and wholeness. The only way Disciples in the Region of Illinois and Wisconsin can ever become the whole people of God is by first acknowledging that there is brokenness in the church and the world and that they are ready to deal with transformative reconciliation and restoration.

Justo Gonzalez says, "It is the task of the church to do what the world cannot do. Therefore promoting a new and true mutual discovery among the people of this earth is

²³⁴ Ibid., 5.

certainly the task of the church.”²³⁵ James Cone believes, “The challenge for black theology in the Twentieth Century is to develop an enduring race critique that is so comprehensively woven into Christian understanding that no one will be able to forget the horrible crimes of White supremacy in the modern world.”²³⁶ In other words, the church has no choice about living life as devoted Christians.

THE COMMUNION TABLE AS LIBERATOR

Church historian Ronald Osborn writes,

Disciples of Christ, by consistently celebrating the Lord’s Supper every Lord’s day, have made it a central element in their worship. In this respect, we are more like the Orthodox and Catholic churches than like other Protestant bodies. Appropriately, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) adopted as its symbol the chalice and cross of St. Andrew. Our observance of the Lord’s Supper as a covenant sacrament expresses the fullness of our faith, by sharing the Lord’s Table.²³⁷

At the table of the Lord, people are invited weekly to partake in the sacred meal that transcends hurt, pain, despair, confusion, poverty and pain. Some have said that at no other time in their lives have they felt more part of a family, which makes communion very sacred for them. The theology of table promotes a message of inclusivity and connectedness. It assures all who are members of the body of Christ of their place at the table and as a member of the family of God. At the table, a sacred meal is prepared and offered to all who desire to eat and drink the bread of life and the cup of salvation. This

²³⁵Gonzalez, Justo. *Out of Every Tribe and Nation: Christian Theology at the Ethnic Round Table* (Nashville: Fortress Press 1992), 15.

²³⁶ James Hal Cone, *Risks of Faith: The Emergence of a Black Theology of Liberation 1968-1998* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books), 137.

²³⁷ Osborn, 62.

meal is given to baptized believers in Jesus Christ. At the table, a shared mutual concern for one another makes real the unity of the church. (1Cor 11:17-22 NIV)²³⁸

In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. 18) In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. 19) No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval, 20) When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, without waiting for anybody else. One remains hungry, another gets drunk, 22) don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you for this? Certainly not!

Members of the CCIW Region partake in the meal of communion weekly. The services held as sacred and seen as the most essential part of the worship service. The table is the center of the worship space design.

Usually the table is highlighted with the chalice and plate. It has the cross of Christ in the middle, and it is specially prepared by the diaconate. If the Eucharistic meal is sacred, CCIW will need to reflect upon the true theological meaning of sharing in a meal together as one family of God.

Victor Codina writes, "The primary meals Eucharistic symbol is the fellowship of sharing one meal and cup. In the Bible Image it is the image of the banquet that best expresses the utopia of the Kingdom."²³⁹ He also says,

In the gospels, meals and banquets symbolize the Kingdom in the parables. In the miracles and the symbolic actions of Jesus when he ate with sinners and marginalized people, the meals of the Resurrected one also symbolize the newness of the Kingdom life inaugurated by the resurrection. At the center of these meals is the

²³⁸ I Corinthians 11:17-22 (NIV).

²³⁹ Victor Codina, "Sacraments," in *Systematic Theology: Perspectives from Liberation Theology*, ed. Jon Sobrino and Ignacio Ellacuria (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1996), 227-228.

Last Supper of Jesus, where in an atmosphere of farewell and in a clear reference to the table of the Kingdom the Lord gave his body and blood as the food for the kingdom. In the Eucharist, we not only commune with Jesus, but with his Kingdom Project; we not only edify the church but also anticipate the banquet of the Kingdom. Thus, the Eucharist is inseparable for the fellowship of love and service.²⁴⁰

The writes asks, if the Eucharist is inseparable for the fellowship of love and service then what about after Sunday? Does the sacredness of the communion transcend and break down church walls? Is the idea and theology shared around the bread and cup valid outside the Sunday morning table? Or is it a façade of westernized culture and tradition?

If Christians in CCIW truly embodied what they have gathered from the communion table, that is, the assurance of pardon and forgiveness of sins, inclusivity, and unity, it must be modeled around the boardroom table, the dining table, the pool table, and the lunch table. The church must carry the message of liberation beyond Sunday morning. This message must be carried to those who do not look like us. The message must be carried to those who are not as wealthy, impoverished, depressed, and brokenhearted. It is a message that must transcend color lines and socio-economic lines. It is a message that must affirm the oneness believers all have in Jesus Christ.

The church must affirm the oneness of Jesus Christ and ourselves with all who suffer, especially the oppressed, mistreated, and deprived (Matt. 25:31-46). The words “broken body” and “shed blood” remind believers of God’s presence as suffering love with all victims of the world’s cruelty. This is not an easy concept for Christians to comprehend. No one appreciates suffering. The thought of those who lost their lives in

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Ike is unbearable. Knowing God's love and presence with them through their suffering is what pushes those who have not been affected back to the table.

Humanity does not like suffering. Suffering and despair are to some inhumane. Suffering and despair are inevitable. It is the knowledge and belief in the act that Jesus performed on the cross that walks with believers in times of trouble. Osborn writes,

We assert the secular character of our faith. Faith's most sacred act requires wheat and bread, grapes and cup, and a company of sinners bringing their lives before the Lord. This act is not an escape from the world, but a joyful affirmation of God's involvement with the world. We renew the covenant between Jesus Christ and ourselves (Mark 14:24-25). Here once more we claim his love as the dominant power in our lives, both in the church and in the world. In covenant-community we affirm that 'at the table of the Lord' we celebrate with thanksgiving the saving acts and presence of Christ.²⁴¹

It is not written in scripture that the communion table is exclusively set aside for White people, Black people, Hispanic people, or Native American people; the table is open for all who desire to gather. The table is where the least of these are suppose to be welcomed. The table is the place where individuals are recognized as members of the body of Christ. They are embraced and treated with dignity by the family of God. Where do the least of these fit in the body of Christ? They fit right "next to me, next to you." Is there space at the table for those who are oppressed to receive the meal of grace and be seen as members of the family of God? The inception of the table theology was created for those who were oppressed. The table of the Lord where everyone is welcome is a traditional gathering, but it also is suppose to connect to the everyday struggle of people.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 63.

Tee Garlington in his paper, *Eucharist and Racism* talks about why Racism cannot exist along the Eucharist. He makes a case for I Corinthians 11:29, “For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.”²⁴² Garlington says, this message becomes clear . . . “Discerning the Lord’s body means accepting and receiving all brothers and sisters on an equal basis, not withholding community from some because of racial prejudice... We cannot, we must not, refuse community with any believer on the basis of racial or national origin.”²⁴³

The church, a reflection of the body of Christ on earth, must be determined to struggle with the inclusivity of what it means to be one with Christ and one with humanity. There is a need to move from exclusive to inclusive. Youth are leading the way of what it means to be inclusive and not exclusive. Many times youth are considered the oppressed. In the region of CCIW, they are welcomed at the communion table once baptized. Throughout the rest of the life of the church, they are often placed in a category all by themselves. In every other part of church life, they must be invited to have a representative voice. This includes church boards, programming, and even participating in the worship service. There are times when they are denied the access to share their life, experiences, and traditions with adults. Youth are human, but they often come to the table with no voice.

They are treated as mere extensions of their parent’s voices and not as individuals. Youth are a representative body who should be able to come to the table without questions. They bring an expanded perspective about what it means to embody the true

²⁴² I Corinthians 11:29 (NIV).

²⁴³Garlington,79.

meaning of the table. They are able to forgive, receive, and share in a meal with those who are not like them, by first being willing to try something new.

This paper shows how youth participating in this model will affect the future by working toward a structure that will improve racial understanding and provide opportunity for honest and authentic dialogue with all God's humanity. Youth will look at important theological issues of Racism and liberation. They will grapple at what it means to ask questions of those who are different from them. They will look at scripture, ask what about their life experiences have supported their beliefs as Disciples of Christ, and move toward conversation that is more substantial.

Through this model, the voice of youth in the Regional Church will offer a new and stronger attempt toward change in every area of the church, especially the area of racial understanding. Youth are participating in "Mission Trips" and Youth Sundays as ways to express their faith. They have seen firsthand what it means to be marginalized and to have marginalized others. Therefore, youth will be more cautious as they seek a behavioral change in the practice of marginalizing others. Through these experiences, youth have been theologizing and living out ways to offer unity and wholeness to the entire body of Christ by working to organize opportunities that will improve racial understanding and provide honest and authentic dialogue.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

The method of research used in this model is Qualitative. John W. Creswell explains Qualitative research in the following ways by writing, it “often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspectives (i.e., the multiple meanings of individual experiences, meanings socially and historically constructed, with intent of developing a theory or pattern) or advocacy/participatory perspectives.”¹ The researcher collects open-ended, emerging data with the primary intent of developing themes from the data. ²A qualitative approach was taken to investigate the hypothesis for this project. This style of research suggested that the lack of racial understanding causes the lack of authenticity in relationships between youth and adult members of the Christian Church in Illinois and Wisconsin. This research helped the participants explore the sin of Racism as both a spiritual and theological problem. They looked critically at Racism in the church and sin that continues to separate and divide the Regional Church. Youth, once gaining an improved racial understanding, worked towards its eradication, while embracing anti-racist /pro-reconciling attitudes and behaviors in the church.

¹ John W. Creswell, *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*, Second edition (Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications, 2003), 19.

² Ibid.

The design of the project was for youth and adult participants from the four areas of the Regional Church in Illinois and Wisconsin (Urban Metro, South, East and West) to devote six months to exploring a model for improving racial understanding. First, Mrs. Martha Herrin, member of the CCIW Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciling team, was consulted to see if she thought the project could be viable in the CCIW Region. Next, the writer selected sixteen persons (12 high school youth and four adult church leaders) of different ethnicities (African-American, Hispanic-American, Korean-American and European American), socio-economical backgrounds, and geographical locations in Illinois and Wisconsin to participate in the model. Those individuals who committed to participate in the program are as follows: Diane Hassell (Adult-Chicago-UMA), Shekia Hassell (Chicago-UMA); Rev. Dwight E. Bailey (Adult-Oak Park-UMA); Jewel Wakefield (Chicago-UMA), Alejandra Romero (Milwaukee, UMA), Katherine Warren (East Area), Ben Dungan (East Area), Kelsey Larson (East Area), Morgan Pace (East Area); Leah Wiseheart (West Area), Rev. Christal L. Williams (Adult-West-UMA), Sarah Frakes (West Area), Sarah Scattergood (South Area), Matt De Cosse (South Area), Kirsten Webb (South Area); and Martha Herrin (Adult-South Area).

After the participants were selected, they were told the purpose for the model. These purposes were the following: a) to understand Racism as a spiritual evil separating the children of God in the church and world, b) to build strong relationships with persons of different ethnicities and cultures, c) to recognize the ways that history, laws, and institutions (the church) socialize us and perpetuate Racism; and d) to claim pro-reconciling/ anti-racist attitudes, identity, and behaviors as individuals and a Regional Church.

The writer of the project and context associates devised an action plan that would consist of a three-day cross-cultural mission trip, anti-Racism /pro-reconciling training, three-day retreat, pre-post test surveys.

A pre-test survey was given to each participant prior to any field experience. The pre-test survey, asked questions about individual relationships with persons of a different ethnicity inside and outside of church. At the conclusion of the project a post-test survey will consist of the same questions asked in the pre-test. The writer at that time will check for attitudinal and behavioral changes in the participants with the hopes of a greater understanding of what it means to be one body of Christ in the Church regardless to ethnicity.

Announcements during Regional Church events, as well as personal invitations by the writer of the project were extended, personal and Regional emails to church leaders and youth, Constant Contact electronic mail sent by the Regional Church office to all congregations, fliers, and telephone calls prompted involvement in the project.

A map of the Region and the designated areas, and letters are found in Appendix A. The Context Associates which consisted of pastors and laity who assisted in planning the cross-cultural mission trip, the anti-Racism/pro-reconciliation training and writing the questionnaire were both participant/observers throughout the entire project. Other Context Associates, prayed, consulted, and asked poignant questions about the steps in the process. The Context Associates were the following: Mrs. Martha J. Herrin, Stewardson, Illinois; Rev. Ellen H.G. Culpepper, Pastor Centennial Christian Church, Bloomington, Illinois; Mrs. Camille Taylor, high school Guidance Counselor and High

School Diverse Club Advisor, Normal, Illinois; Rev. Dwight E. Bailey, Pastor of the Austin Boulevard Christian Church, Oak Park, Illinois.

Professional Associates consulted in the organization of the paper, collected data and factual information to support the document. They also provided insight into the denomination's diverse and anti-Racism/pro-reconciling issues. They suggested reading materials, persons to contact, and prayed for the writer as she moved through the project. Included as Professional Context Associates were the following persons: The Rev. Dr. William Chris Hobgood, former General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and author; The Rev. Dr. Timothy James, Associate General Minister and President and Deputy Secretary for the National Convocation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); The Rev. Dr. Burley F. Herrin, Pastor of First Christian Church in Lincoln, Nebraska, and historian.

This project created opportunities for the participants to explore the Region's geographical boundaries outside their own town and cultures. Secondly, it enabled the participants to spend time traveling together, dialoguing and exchanging conversations about stereotypes and other questions pertaining to racial beliefs, church practices and cultural understanding of what it means to be the body of Christ.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

The participants attended a three-day retreat, cross-cultural mission trip to Washington D.C., CCIW Regional Assembly and pre-test post- test. Data was collected from the survey questionnaires and notes were taken after each event. Interviews were conducted after the cross-cultural mission trip. Additional information was received at the CCIW Midwinter Youth Retreat.

The timeline of this research project was from May 25, 2008, through November 17, 2008:

May 25, 2008: The writer of this project met with context associate, Mrs. Martha Herrin, at Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles, Illinois, to discuss specific literature and bibliographical data that would support the foundational portion of this project. This was the first conversation held to discuss and outline a potential cross-cultural trip with context participants to Washington, D.C.

May 25, 2008: The writer of the model met with Professional Associate, Rev. Dr. Burley Herrin, to discuss the Regional and denominational church historic implications and present perspective of the document. His D. Min. work was in the field of the historical and theological relevance of regional and middle judicatory work throughout the Christian Church in Illinois & Wisconsin and the denomination.

June 25, 2008: The writer recruited youth from the UMA, South, East and Western areas of the region to be participants in the model. There was some resistance throughout the Region because of the issue of Racism. Youth leaders in the local congregation did not pass out pertinent information to youth about this model. Youth adult sponsors said that they are interested. However, they did not sign up to participate. The criteria for participation in the project were the following:

- High school student-finished eighth grade
- Adult participants who are active in the life and ministry of local congregation in one of CCIW four areas and a participant in the Regional Church life
- Representative of a youth group in the Region of the Christian Church in Illinois and Wisconsin
- Must have at least one representative from all known cultures and congregations in the Region of the Christian Church in Illinois and Wisconsin
- Must be baptized believer in the Church who have participated in the weekly communion service
- Must be able to give at least a six month commitment to the project
- Must participate in the cross-cultural mission trip, three day retreat, anti-Racism training events

July 5, 2008: The writer continued to face resistance from the local congregations about the submission of names of qualified youth and adult participants. The week that the writer and context associated had planned for the Washington, DC, cross-cultural experience for July 08, was cancelled due to lack of participants and registration.

August 15, 2008: The writer decided, as one of the Regional Pastors of the Christian Church in Illinois & Wisconsin, that some of the youth participants were going to be hand chosen from the Regional Youth Council and congregations around the Region to be part of the model!

THREE DAY TREATMENT IN BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS

Friday, August 29, 2008- The writer and members from the Christian Church in Illinois & Wisconsin Regional Youth council and model participants met for an overnight retreat in Bloomington, Illinois. This meeting was held at the Regional Office. All participants were expected to arrive by 6 PM in the evening. After their arrival youth were introduction to the idea and concept of the project and model. At this introductory meeting youth had an opportunity to have some free conversation about racism in the world, this country, the church and finally in the Region's local congregations. Over a pizza dinner, participants began to test the waters to see if they could pursue the project beyond the weekend, and to see what it might look like as a Regional Church model and project. This was the first time that youth of different cultures spent the night together in one place.

Saturday, August 30, 2008, The Regional Youth and The writer, Christal L. Williams holds the second session of the weekend retreat at the home of Rev Neil and Rev. Dorothy Sallee. There the youth participate in morning devotionals and worship together as one group. The theme was 'Diversity.' There were journal writings, and a brief conversation on what diversity would look like in the church and the world. At 10am the participants traveled back to the Regional Office and began the third session of

the weekend. At the Regional Office of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Illinois & Wisconsin youth participated in Peggy McIntosh's 'Unpacking the Knapsack' exercise. Youth are asked to stand behind a taped line to see if they are able to progress after being asked specific questions about societal and world privilege and accessibility. The purpose of this exercise is to notice those in the room who are unable to progress due to the lack of access to things like housing, hair care products, racial profiling, and financial resources. The participants were surprised to see who was able to progress and those who were unable to move forward. The test showed that it was the African-Americans who could not progress forward.

Sunday, August 31, 2008: Participants worshipped at a local White congregation. Afterwards they received a calendar of events for the next meetings. They exchanged email addresses, My Space information and Facebook electronic network system addresses.

September 18, 2008, the writer met with Context Associate, Mrs. Martha Herrin, in La Grange, Illinois, to discuss more in depth the youth aspect of the Anti-Racism Training and Workshop model. They agreed that the information youth will be hearing and receiving was heavy in its content. The writer and the Context Associate agreed that the information must be examined and given on a level the youth could understand and comprehend. It was also agreed that it must be given in increments. In addition, it is true that anti-Racism information will take time and even after this model and project is complete to continue working with youth in this Region to experience perpetuation of a message of eradication and to see the effects of a model of improved dialogue. This

meeting was also a second review of literature for the bibliography and the foundation portions of the paper.

September 18, 2008: The writer met with the Professional Associate, Rev. Dr. Chris Hobgood to discuss the youth anti-Racism, cross cultural experience details in Washington, D.C. At this meeting, Dr. Hobgood offered information about resources and additional training for organizing and strategizing to more effectively mobilize both youth and adults in CCIW. There is a second attempt to organize a delegation to the cross-cultural experience to Washington, D.C. There were sixteen participants in this model. There were four participants from each area of the Region. There is a mixture of African-Americans, Caucasians, Hispanics, Native Americans, and Korean participants in the process.

September 30, 2008: Researcher met with the Context Associate, a Pastor in the Christian Church in Illinois & Wisconsin, Rev. Dwight E. Bailey to talk about the theology of the church. (Liberation theology and the work of anti-Racism)

THE CROSS CULTURAL MISSION TRIP TO WASHINGTON D.C.

This cross-cultural mission trip to Washington, D.C. provided time outside the Region of Illinois and Wisconsin to promote team building, facilitate discussion around the areas of the Regional Church activities, and participation among youth, and to open up different opportunities to explore culture diversity and awareness. In addition, ten hours of anti-Racism /pro-Reconciliation training around the three main areas of Racism-institutional, cultural, and individual – were offered. The sixteen participants represented

ten of the Region's 168 congregations in their responses. The participants on this trip were representative of two congregations per area.

Thursday, October 30, 2008. Participants departed Chicago, Illinois, by Southwest Airlines to Baltimore Washington International Airport. Participants were somewhat reserved in how they dialogued with those from a different culture. The African-Americans were clustered in their group and were somewhat aloof towards the rest of the group. The White participants were very quiet and did not speak much. The writer of the project sensed fear and apprehension on the part of the Whites.

Also, no one in this group had ever participated in a cross-cultural experience. As participants claimed their baggage, the writer and a context associate picked up the rental vans and came back to 'BWI' to gather participants. Although, the writer had a pre-assigned room list, there were no van assignments and immediately participants began boarding vans based on racial group. All of the People of Color were in one van. All of the Whites were in the other.

The writer thought this was due to the lateness of the evening and the participants' energy level. Once we arrived at the Staybridge Suites Hotel, Tyson's Corner in McLean, Virginia, the writer checked in the participants and then began assigning rooms. The author intentionally assigned rooms based on a mixture of different cultural backgrounds. The writer sensed more apprehension based upon the facial expressions of the participants. The writer took note of what she observed. However, she ignored the facial expressions and kept assigning room. After sleeping room assignments were given participants met in the hotel conference room for a brief overview of their time in Washington, D.C.

Friday, October 31, 2008: Day Two: Participants had breakfast by 9 am. The first session began at 9:30 am. At this time participants received another over view of the time in Washington. An opening Bible study and worship was led by Rev. Dwight E. Bailey. The next step of the day was to ask participants to covenant in creating a safe space and environment to talk about the issue of racism. This included writing on a flipchart behavior rules for gaining mutual respect and understanding. This would be the behavioral covenant that we would all live by throughout the model. Mrs. Martha Herrin began introducing participants to the first anti/Racism workshop. This forty-five minute workshop covered an introduction to Racism; the Socialization of the culture; and it explored individual cultural biases.

The second part of the day included touring the White House, The Capital Building, The Hart's Senate Building, Senator Barack Obama's office. Participants were excited about touring the White House. However, at the Capital Building as the group entered the Rotunda they were somewhat sadden to notice a mural which depicted major scenes from American history omit slavery. When the tour guide was asked to explain, she had no explanation why it did not exist on the mural. The purpose of the day was to help participants comfortably explore and discuss the issues of race in the world without any barriers.

Saturday, November 1, 2008: Anti-Racism Workshop Session Two discussed the issues of Communion and Individual Racism in the Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Illinois & Wisconsin. Today participants visited the Frederick Douglass Museum, The Native American-Museum, and Ben's Chili Bowl. Participants were introduced to the Crossroads Ministries working definition of Racism: "Race

Prejudice + The misuse of Power in Systems and Institutions= Racism.” It helped the participants to recognize the presence of cultural biases in their own thinking as they journey towards exposure and dialogue. Cultural racism was the topic for today’s lesson. Also, participants were placed with partners of a different culture. This was to help ensure some diversity in conversation and opinions at the evening discussions. Youth took a tour of the Frederick Douglass Museum. Also, they watched a forty-five minute short film on the life and work of Frederick Douglass.

Youth had dinner at the historic Ben’s Chili Bowl, an African-American landmark in the Washington, D.C. area. The owner’s Son offered a history lesson about African-Americans in the D.C area and the civil rights movement.

Sunday, November 2, 2008. Day Three: Participants worshipped at the predominately African-American congregation, Michigan Park Christian Church where the Rev. Dr. Delores Causion Carpenter is the Pastor. After worship, in a second meeting, the youth met and had an extensive conversation with the denomination’s Pastor for Social Justice and Network, The Rev. Ken Brooker-Langston. Workshop Two: included conversation about Racism in and throughout the denominational church and the hopes that youth who are unable to vote at this time will help lead the way of eradicating the sin that continues to divide the nation and church. The participants also looked at the harmful effects of cultural Racism in the country and church.

The cross-cultural trip lent to the discussion about the nature of racism in that this sin has been directly rooted in the nation’s capital. This trip and experience was enhanced by a visit to one of our denomination’s largest congregations. The National City Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) was church home to two Presidents (James A. Garfield, and

Lyndon B. Johnson). The National City congregation is home to a ‘Global Gifts’ store, a refugee cross-cultural trading and merchandising enterprise. Secondly, participants studied scripture and were in conversation around the sacrament of communion and unity in the body of Christ. To end the day participants visited the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Monday, November 3, 2008. Day Four: This was the last day of the Cross-Culture mission experience. Before traveling back to Illinois, Participants visited George Washington’s Mt. Vernon Plantation in Maryland. They took a tour of the grounds. They learned about slave quarters and dialogued with facilitator about slave life on the plantation. Participants took the Post-test survey and departed back to Illinois. During the return flight participants spontaneously sat with others of a different culture as a way to collaborate in the quest to exemplify changes in racial attitudes and behaviors.

Also, the writer of this project conducted informal interviews around the project. Participant responses from the weekend were awesome. Participants showed concern in the area of not having enough time with one another. Participants However, desired more time in Washington to explore more of the history of the country and how People of Color contributed to the growth of the country. How could we do more of this type of exploration back home in Illinois. There is more about activities in Appendices.

THE CCIW REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Friday, November 14, 2008: The writer and participants attended the “CCIW” Regional Assembly in Springfield, Illinois. This weekend was used to spend time remembering, re-imagining and re-presenting our time together over the last weeks and

months. This weekend also invited more youth to participate in an impromptu dialogue on the model to improve racial understanding. Also, youth participate in worship, mission, and conversation to broaden the dialogue. Eighty youth were present at a meeting to discuss the model of racial understanding in the Region Christian Church in Illinois and Wisconsin. Youth enjoyed it. Youth and sponsor said, it was one of the best Regional assemblies in a long time.

Saturday, November 15, 2008: Youth did service projects, and had additional workshops on anti-Racism and pro-reconciliation in the Regional and local church, including a workshop on the late eighteen century, early 1900s riots that took place in Springfield, Illinois. There was workshop on the Underground Railroad in Illinois. This was another opportunity to broaden the dialogue among youth & model participants about both their individual and collective experiences. At the end of this particular weekend, there was a total of 350 hours of youth and adult participation in dialogues, conversation, retreats and workshop training events received around the model for improving racial understanding among youth in CCIW.

Sunday, November 16, 2008: Youth had closing worship service. Youth received notes of completion. At this time, the Post-Test Questionnaire had been scored and results shared. Results of the Survey Pre-test and Post-test can be found in the Appendix B.

MEASUREMENT

The writer used Focus Groups 3rd Edition: A Practical Guide for Applied Research¹ to help support her work with measurement of the model. The pre-test was given in Chicago, Illinois. The post-test questionnaire surveys were completed after the mission trip to Washington, D.C.

Results of the project were measured by the following procedures: A) Observational: watching and dialoguing with the participants throughout the life of the project; three-part pre-test and post-test questionnaire that measured the attitudinal and behavioral responses from the participants regarding feelings, attitudinal and behavioral changes. B) Participants had the opportunity to write in journals, to use the electronic tools of “Facebook” and “My Space” as additional ways to communicate with other participants after the project had concluded. Additionally, they had opportunity to share and to write about their feelings with the writer of the project. The participants spent significant time debriefing in small groups with context associates and speaking privately. They also debriefed their own feelings and findings with the writer of the project through informal interviews.

The writer of the paper met with the Context Associates by telephone and in person to discuss the type of questions needed for the project. Context Associates felt that the questions should not be open-ended. The survey questions should be geared towards asking specific questions about the participants’ specific experiences. Also, questions should be asked that could easily reflect change in the participants’ behavior and

¹ Richard A. Krueger and Mary Anne Casey, Focus Groups 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications 2000).

attitudes. See Appendix B for a copy of the documents. The writer of this project observed the anxiety, fear and lack of knowledge of other cultures in the participants. This timidity in the participants made the initial times of gathering somewhat a challenge. Participants did not easily mix and mingle. They found comfort remaining connected with their own racial groups. Although, there were only two vans transporting participants at all times, each found ways to stay with who made them feel most comfortable. The writer observed, in the vans, African-American participants wanted to dominate the radio stations and the music. However, it was the observation of the writer that those of White culture enjoyed the same songs, and musical groups of African-Americans. While traveling, participants ate fast foods most times.

However, choices in entries were noticeably different between the cultures. African-American participants ate heavy foods such as French fries, hamburgers, and ribs and chicken: White participants ate salads, rice, sandwiches and pizza and buffalo chicken wings. White participants ate substantially less than participants of Color did. Throughout this experience, the writer noticed that White participants were hungry at all three designated meal times. Participants of Color were not.

The writer carefully observed the wardrobe of the youth participants. The clothing worn by all cultures was somewhat the same. However, the writer observed that the African-American participants cared more about appearances, clothing, shoes and hairstyles. The African-American Female participants wore clothing lines such as “Baby Phat, Roca Wear, Enyce, Guess and Coach.” The White female participants wore “Walmart brand, Abercrombie and Fitch and Hollister.” In a conversation about clothes, African –American participants were aware of those brands, but chose not to enter those

stores, because they felt they were “too White.” White participants had never heard or seen the African-American brands of clothing, but immediately commented on the trendy styles and hair arrangements of African-American female participants.

When the writer fell and sprained her ankle at the White House, she observed that the African-American participants pushed her in the wheel chair, and helped her get in and out of the vans. White participants shared duties by administering medications, bandages and belongings were being transported. It was the writer’s assumption that the participants unconsciously took on the historic roles that society previously outlined for both cultures.

THE PRE-TEST-POST-TEST:

It was the observation of the writer that the participants did not want to take the pre-test. She observed this for several reasons: a) it involved writing, b) it involved answering questions about another culture while they were present and c) what did all these questions mean and would this put a damper on the project if we had a conversation around Racism in the Church and the world.

STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF THE PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST

Those who responded in the pre-test and post-test surveys were all members of Christian Churches in the Region of Illinois & Wisconsin. The respondents were youth (60%) with 40% adults respondents. The respondents were of African-Americans, Caucasians, Hispanics, Korean-Americans descent. The adults included, two clergy-persons, an elder, and a pre-school teacher/anti-Racism coordinator. The survey was written in three parts. A) A variation on the Likert scale model of questions 1-4, the

number four being the highest. Part B) True and False options. This portion of the questionnaire gave participants an opportunity not to expound, but to answer questions and to later discuss why they chose what they did. Part C) An intentional essay format. This was used to get at the heart and feelings of the participant without dictating or adding to what the participants really felt about the issue of Racism and a model for improving dialogue in the church.

Section A:

As a youth and adult in the Region of the CCIW how often do you:

1. Confront others when they are making racial jokes and comments?
 12.50% reported they do not; 25% reported seldom, and 31.25% reported often (pretest) 0% reported they do not; 31.25% reported seldom, and 62.50% reported often, and 31.25% reported always (posttest)

The number of participants who confronted others making racial jokes and comments increased significantly by thirty percent over pre-test scores. The writer believes this is due to the time Participants after spent as a group. Once spending time with someone from another background, and sharing personal stories they found they had more data to measure the truth about stereotype and other information used to perpetuate Racism. Participants found the more information they gained about one another, the more they could defend other cultural groups. Also, after spending time together talking about and ways to confront, and combat Racism some participants felt that was not a true reflection of their faith to laugh, and not confront those making the comments.

2. Call someone a racial slur or name without their knowledge?

50.00% reported they do not, 31.25% reported seldom, 18.75% reported often. (pre-test) 75.00% reported they do not, 25.00% reported seldom, and 00.00 % reported always (post-test)

The writer believes that the number decreased in those participants reporting they often call persons racial slurs or names without their knowledge is due to the anti-Racism workshop trainings in which participants learned how the slurs were originated and the harmful effects of those names. In the workshop we discussed stereotypes and Names and had an exercise around slurs. The writer found that most of the participants were not aware that the names were harmful. This led to a slight change.

3. Discuss and understand holidays, events, and societal gatherings of those from a different culture than your own? (Ex. MLK Holiday, African-American History Month, Casimir Pulaski Day, Juneteenth, Yom Kippur, Ramadan, etc?)

31.25% reported seldom, 37.50% reported often, 31.25% reported always. (pre-test) 00.00% reported seldom, 62.50% reported often, and 37.50% reported always (post-test)

The writer of the project notes a twenty-five percent increase in the number of participants in the post-test who felt they discussed and understood holidays, and events of those from a different culture. The writer believes that this significant change is due to the number of activities and workshop exercises and discussion held during the implementation of the model. Participants, also found they knew more about other culture's holidays and celebration than they thought. At the very least participants recognized days off from school as valid knowledge.

2. Judge someone based on the color of his or her skin?

62.50% reported I do not, 12.50% reported seldom, 25.00% reported often, and 00.00% reported always (pre-test) 56.25% reported seldom, 31.25% reported often, and 12.50% reported always (post-test)

The writer of the project noticed 60% participants in the pre-test said, they did not judge base on one's skin color. 0% percent admitted in the pre-test that they did not.

There is a significant decrease in the number who do not; 29% increase in those who seldom judge and a 12% increase in the one who reported always. The writer believes this significant change due to the exposure and the dialogue participants had with persons other than their own culture. Exposure to persons of different skin color and their major contributions to society help to encourage a change of attitude and thought patterns of the participants. Participants were able to recognize for themselves that people are not all as one group would describe them as being. One must seek knowledge for his or her self.

Section B: True and False Questions

A) Racism in the Church does not exist ?

(pre-test) 2 True, 14 False (post-test)-16 False

The writer of this project believes that the numbers in this question shifted, because participants, once learning more about racial systems and power over individuals they decided, that they saw racist behaviors in their churches. After the tours, workshops and conversations with Rev. Ken Brooker Langston, thoughts changed.

B) Racism is the Black Communities' Problem?

(pre-test) 4 True, 8 False, 2 Undecided, (post-test) 16 True

The writer of the project believes that the responses to this question changed in the post-test because the participants of color believe that they too must respond to their own community by informing them that they should no longer accept the idea of victimization that comes along with the pressures of the debilitating effects of Racism.

C) Racism is the White Communities' Problem?

(pre-test) 6 True, 6 False, 4 Undecided , (post-test) 16 True

The participants in this model agreed that Racism is perpetuated by the dominant cultures motives, beliefs, ideas and practices. Participants were introduced to some of these practices first hand when they visited places such as; Mt. Vernon Estate in Maryland; The Holocaust Museum of the Smithsonian, The Frederick Douglass Museum and Home. The writer believes the significant shift in attitudes about the Country and the church directly affected the change shown in the numbers from Pre-test to Post-test.

The result of the tests show significant change in the attitudes of the youth especially the White participants as many of them had never been on a weekend or cross-cultural experience with persons of another culture. Also, there was significant anxiety with White participants because they for once were in the minority in each setting. However, they found participating in the model gave them the opportunity to learn and experience persons of a different cultural background. One White participant said, "I just did not realize how truly connected we all are. We are all just typical teenagers, with some of the same problems."

The changes in attitudes suddenly caused a change in behavior. It was the observance of the writer of this project that once participants begin to talk more and spend time together eating, discovering new ideas, praying and worshipping and 'staying

up late' sharing stories there was a change in behaviors. The female participants begin sharing hats, and scarves and jackets.

JOURNAL ENTRIES

The writer of the project establishes the validity of data in the journal entries, observation notes, and personal informal interviews. Creswell writes, "A procedural perspective that I recommend for research proposals is to identify and discuss one or more strategies available to check the accuracy of the findings."²

An example of a journal entry is:

Journal entry#1- May 25, 2008: The writer of this project met with context associate, Mrs. Martha Herrin at Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles, Illinois to discuss specific literature and bibliographical data that would support the foundational portion of this project. This was the first conversation held to discuss and outline a potential cross-cultural trip with context participants to Washington, DC.

The personal interviews collected by the writer of this project were held on the airplane coming from Washington, D.C., and at the Christian Church in Illinois and Wisconsin's 2008, Regional Assembly in Springfield, Illinois. These interviews were conducted in accordance with John W. Creswell's statement "In interviews, the researcher conducted face to face interviews with five participants. These interviews involve unstructured, informal and generally open-ended questions that are few in number and intended to elicit views from the participants."³

² John W. Creswell, *Research Design, 2nd ed.* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2003), 196.

³ Ibid.,47.

Here are the questions that were asked:

- A) Describe in a about a paragraph or few sentences your definition of Racism?
- B) How has Racism affected your life and Spiritual journey?
- C) Is it a problem in our Region? In what ways?
- D) Will you talk to me about what you feel the body of Christ must do to improve racial dialogue?

The criteria for the interviews were for participants who attended both three-day retreat; Cross-Cultural experience; and those who took the pretest/post test questionnaires.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTION, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION

This research document has been both a spiritual and academic metamorphosis for this writer. By praying, researching, and spending time with participants, the writer was able to explore in-depth the harmful effects of the sin of Racism in the context of the Region of the Christian Church in Illinois and Wisconsin. It was an incredible experience for the writer to research what other theologians and contributors had to say about the subject of Racism in the church. The examples of Louise Derman Sparks and Beverly Tatum in their work with children and youth help to offer the writer some validity of her work. The writer's Bibliography and State of the Art will help others as they search to bring wholeness and unity to the Church and the Academy using young people as a catalyst for such reconciliation.

This has been a tough model to implement. Asking for those who would encourage youth to participate and give of their time was not easy; it met with no cooperation. The writer had to hand pick youth and participants to participate in the model and cover the majority of the fiscal responsibility for participation. This holds true when implementing any Regional Youth Projects that involve People of Color and Caucasian youth to participate together at any function.

Finally, the writer wanted the Caucasian youth who participated in the project not to be penalized by their Caucasian peers from their towns and local congregations for their participation with youth of color in this project. The writer wanted their participation to be a blessing and to be seen and experienced as such. While the project, the writer received phone calls, text messages, and inquiries about it. Some were critical and negative about the quality of the model and those who participated. Those youth and adults who participated in the model “A Model for Improving Racial Understanding in the Christian Church in Illinois & Wisconsin” were tested, challenged, and became better people for their participation.

They learned that life is about much more than tolerance at home, school, church and the world. They learned that Racism is absorbed and this sin that continues to lurk in and throughout our Regional Church must be challenged. The only way to challenge this spiritual and theological problem is by being in conversation with others and dialoging about its harmful effects in the church and the world. This will lead to gaining a sense of understanding while helping to build authentic relationship in and throughout the body of Christ. It is about education that comes through first-hand, personal experience.

The Christian Church in Illinois and Wisconsin is a very strong Region that is on the cutting edge of what it means to be faithful, effective, and innovative in the areas of Church growth, transformation, redevelopment, and relationship building. However, the Regional Church has largely failed to foster healthy relationships between European Americans and People of Color. This writer recognized this need for authentic relationships and improved dialogue to combat the sin of Racism. This spiritual and theological problem must be challenged by those who are mature enough to do the

necessary hard work of building trust, of becoming aware, and of being willing to communicate the need for change.

The writer made several significant observations during this project. The first discovery was the resistance to changing the status quo that somehow gives power to one group over another. Some individuals did not appreciate this model and were offended that the writer would not choose another topic. Some resistance came from youth leaders and parents who are convinced that the Regional Church, the denomination, and the world are all perfect and no one should attempt to tamper with the great denomination of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

A second discovery concerns those persons in the Regional Church who are aware of racial inequality in the Regional church and denomination. They know that there is a problem caused by lack of racial understanding that affects authenticity and hinders true participation in the Body of Christ. However, they do not feel strong enough to speak out about this reality. These are good White Christians who have always supported change, but not publicly. They fear loss of relationships and friendships in the church.

For the writer, this project produced feelings of anxiety about possible jeopardy in employment because she is writing about Racism in her Region. There were times when the writer was questioned about the project and even told that the project was not helpful, especially during the time of such a critical Presidential election. The writer also left her organized weekly prayer group with six Caucasian women because of the issue of Racism in the country and in the church. Working on a model to improve racial understanding has created tensions.

The anxiety, fear, illnesses and writer's block associated with being honest about such a topic tried to hold the writer hostage to a message that needed to be told. The Region in which the writer has devoted nearly ten years of her life and ministry is struggling to accept a mission of Pro-Reconciliation, Anti-Racism, equality, and authenticity. However, to struggle is a good and positive thing.

The sacrament of Holy Communion is important to the writer of this project. She takes seriously the implications of sharing in Christ's body with other brothers and sisters in Christ. It seems as if people think about the shared body and blood, bread and cup, but do not think about asking the dominant culture to give up the fear and injustices that keep us separated as the body of Christ.

This project was about spending time getting to know persons from other cultures and improving racial understanding. This occurred when participants spent time actually traveling, eating, sharing space, and worshiping with persons of different cultures. Their experiences of eating different foods and walking in different neighborhoods and telling stories about one's own culture increased understanding of the mutual problem. The project was about giving the participants an opportunity to tell their own stories in their own words with persons whom they did not know. The participants also learned that life is more than pointing out their noticeable differences. It is about taking the time to find out about how truly connected and alike they are as children of God. They all came from different neighborhoods and lifestyles, but as members of the human race, they share many things. Their worship services are different, but all truly face many of the same problems.

Yes, each participant learned and agreed that Racism is sin. A sin is absorbed and continues to be passed on throughout generations. The participants agreed that this sin must be eradicated. If the church does not continue to have such models, the church and the world will never change. The writer understands that many times youth are innocent and live at the discretion and sometimes mis-information, misfortune, and lack of authenticity and understanding of their parents, guardians, and pastors. It is not the intent of the writer to bring harm or misrepresentation to their unique voices. Many of the youth growing up in Illinois & Wisconsin live in homogeneous communities without People of Color within hours of their locale. However, the writer feels that it is the responsibility of the church to make possible opportunities for meetings, for worship and for the building of significant relationships and other substantial connections.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Step One: The writer choosing to attend United Theological Seminary and to participate in the D.Min. project.

Step Two: The writer spending an intentional five-day period in prayer and fasting to determine worth of such a project and model.

Step Three: The writer spending hundreds of dollars, telephone hours and email dialogue with Professional and Context associates searching for available leadership, literature, and participants to help pursue research in the area of youth, Racism, and racial understanding in the Christian Church in Illinois and Wisconsin and the denomination. Due to the lack of information directly related to youth and Racism in the church or any mainline denomination, it took significant time for the writer to generate her information

and draw out the relevant information from those books, journals, and persons who have had some experience with youth and anti-Racism efforts in the denomination.

Step Four: The writer spending time making arrangements for youth to travel cross-culturally to Washington, D.C., the youth Anti-Racism Training Workshops, Three-day retreat and other workshops. The financial support of the project is significantly underwritten by the generosity of the Social Concerns Committee of the Christian Church in Illinois and Wisconsin.

The writer is aware that a weakness in this particular model has to do with the six-month project timeline. However, the writer feels it must become ongoing. The model is a first step, not a one-time program. The sin of Racism took more than a generation to settle in our country and in our church. Therefore, it will not change overnight. This country and this church are dealing with centuries of this sin. It continues day by day to affect both its perpetrators and victims.

Anyone who chooses to take on a model of this magnitude should truly be called and led by God to tackle the injustices both seen and unseen of humanity in the church and the world. This model is truly a testament of one's life work and calling as a Minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The writer believes that it is the voice of God that continues to ask her to take a long, hard look at the effects of the sin of Racism on the body of Christ. The writer, an African-American clergywoman in this Region, found it difficult to listen to those who have made up their minds that they do not want to change, especially those persons are determined that People of Color should remain subordinate to Whites.

In addition, the writer found it hard when those sisters and brothers she loves wholeheartedly with the love of Christ are unwilling to show the reciprocal love of Jesus

Christ with someone of a different skin color. At Regional worship services and Assemblies when Regional church members write on evaluations that prayers of confessions and repentance are too long and should not be part of the Regional Church's Assembly or when folks congratulate People of Color for their "stunning performance" during worship. Yes, these examples continue to be racist and unwarranted. Yet, the writer believes that in time and with appropriate education, the church will someday affirm what it means to be the total family of God and will see and feel the pain of those who are alienated as strangers. They will see that Jesus truly did break down the walls of hostility and division so that all God's children are able to feast on the faith, grace, and new covenant given to us by God's Son, Jesus Christ.

As a Regional pastor and conference minister, this author would not suggest anyone in this role take on this model. This project might have been more effective if a layperson or one who had significant time in their scheduling had implemented it. The writer encourages anyone who finds this model interesting to keep adding to the idea of the model. One should continue to find ways to reframe the dialogue and to gain understanding among people and cultures in the church and the world. The writer invites folks to remember that God is calling individual members of the Church and humanity to wholeness, truth, and authenticity.

Keep in mind that at its best the Church of Jesus Christ must continue striving to be a genuine representation of the authentic Body of Jesus Christ which exemplifies what it means to be Anti-Racist and Pro-Reconciling salvific community here on earth.

APPENDIX A

MAP OF REGION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN ILLINOIS AND WISCONSIN, LETTERS, YOUTH WORKSHOP OUTLINE

September 15, 2008

Dear CCIW Family,

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Illinois & Wisconsin's Bridge Builder Experience, an initiative of the Pro-Reconciling/Anti-Racism Team is inviting the Regional Youth and other guests to join us in a four-day exploration to our Nation's Capital. (Washington DC.) The dates for this spiritually uplifting and historically motivating youth venture are (Thursday, October 30, 2008 through Monday, November 3, 2008).

The purpose of this 2008, journey is to have our youth ask critical questions in light of these following matters: (The 2008 Historical Presidential Race, The War in Iraq, This Country's Racial Barriers, and The Separation between Church and State). Some of our questions will be, "How is God asking the Church of Jesus Christ to respond to these matters in the 21st century?" "Are people still being judge based on the color of their skin?" "Should a woman run this country?" "Is there truly a separation between Church and State?" We will spend four dynamic days exploring the effects of Individual, Cultural, and Systemic Racism in our Church and Country! To do this we will use exposure to the light of Biblical Scripture, Inspiring talks and study seminars, Sharing of ideas with other youth, Site seeing, and Tourism to under gird and support our thoughts, claims, questions, and feedback.

This historical quest will help youth to begin formulating their own opinions of Governmental, Institutional, Cultural and Systemic policies and procedures found in the Church and in this country. The trip will ask them to think spiritually and critically about what it means to unify as a members of the body of Christ and citizens of this country! It will ask them to define in their own words what it means to take communion each Sunday, as a way to live out their faith, and their citizenship in this country. We believe our youth will return energized, full of vision, and ready to help take the lead in demonstrating what it means to live out the vision and mission of the 21st century church.

Finally, as we take this trip, we want our delegation to come back to our Region spreading the news to other Youth, and Adults alike, saying times are changing, people are changing, and youth are changing. There is a shifting in the faces of American Leadership, Policies and Procedures. The face of leadership in our churches and denominations are changing as well. One of the ways to be faithful stewards in the midst of this shift is to explore more postmodernism ways of thinking and viewing God, Life, Humanity and the World. This trip will help us all become more open, more available for

improving dialogue and more willing to widen our view of God, and deepen our relationships with one another. (Culturally and Spiritually Grounded)

THE COSTS FOR THIS TRIP!

The total cost for a trip like this would general run around \$1500.00 per participant. However, due to the generosity of the Regional Social Concerns committee and Reconciliation we can offer it at a discounted expense of **\$625.00** per person.

This fee covers the following items: A roundtrip Southwest Airlines flight from Chicago Midway Airport to Washington DC. (BWI Airport); Four nights Lodging at (Stay bridge Suites; Tyson's Corner) in McLean Virginia; Ten Meals (two lunches are at the expense of the participant); Ground transportation, Fees into scheduled activities and sites around Washington D.C. To make this trip as successful as possible we are asking that participant let us know by September 20, 2008, of their intentions of joining this delegation. We are asking for an initial deposit of \$200.00 to be sent to the CCIW Regional Office, 1011 North Main Street, Bloomington, Illinois 61701 by September 20, 2008. Second payment is due by October 15, 2008 and Final payment is due October 26, 2008.

There will be no refunds available after October 15th!

God Bless You,

Rev. Christal Williams, Mrs. Martha Herrin, Rev. Dwight E. Bailey

A MODEL FOR IMPROVING RACIAL UNDERSTANDING
CROSS-CULTURAL EXPERIENCE 2008
ANTI-RACISM/PRO-RECONCILING YOUTH WORKSHOP

INTRODUCTORY SESSION (2 hours)

- | | |
|---|------------|
| ❖ Welcome and Purpose/Goals of the Event
(May want to chart their hopes and fears) | 15 minutes |
| ❖ Group Building
“Choosing Sides” (<i>Race to Justice</i>) | 30 minutes |

Designate three points in the room and mark them “Very,” “Somewhat,” and “Not at All.” Participants will move to one of these places in response to these questions.

- How much do you like hot fudge sundaes?
- How much have you traveled outside Illinois?
- How much do you enjoy your classes at school this year?
- How tired are you?
- ☐ How comfortable are you as a member of this Bridge Builders Experience?
- How familiar are you with issues of racial prejudice?
- How often do you see acts of prejudice in your daily life?
- How large a role do you think racial problems play in your school?
- How often do you think about your race?
- How comfortable are you talking about issues of race and racial justice?

Debrief the game

- What did you learn about yourself and others?
- How did it feel?

Summary statement and transition

- | | |
|--|------------|
| Introduction to Racism | 45 minutes |
| 1. Socialization | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Dot” Exercise | |

I'd like you to try an exercise. Make 9 dots on a piece of paper like this.

Have the 9 dots on a piece of chart paper.	. . .
	. . .

The task is to connect all the dots with 4 straight lines without lifting your pen/pencil. (Repeat directions.) O.K., let's do it.

Debrief:

What was the solution? Why weren't you able to get it?

What box? Why did you see a box? Why did you stay inside it?

We have all been socialized. We've been socialized, 1st, to see the box and then, 2nd, to stay inside the box. It has nothing to do with intelligence; the smartest of us have been socialized to work inside a box.

- *Lies My Teacher Told Me* by James Loewen
 - ✓ History is taught to shape citizenship, not to think critically
 - ✓ Wilson and Parks Exercise
 - 1) List five things you know about Woodrow Wilson & Rosa Parks
 - 2) Debrief
 - ✓ Discussion of who is even in history books, i.e. Benjamin Banneker

2. What is Racism? (Gather their responses)

3. Definition

- Prejudice

What is prejudice?

Not the same as Racism

- Race

Do you check the boxes?

Are you what they say you are?

What is race?

- Power
 - Misuse by systems and institutions
 - P¹ over POC
 - P² Provides
 - Protects
 - Preserves
 - Privilege/advantage for White people
 - P³ socialization/racialization—socializes all of us into racial rules
 - Individual
 - Institutional
 - Cultural

❖ Worship/Bible Study

30 minutes

INSTITUTIONAL RACISM SESSION (2 hours)

- ❖ Worship/Bible Study 30 minutes

- ❖ Introduce institutional Racism 20 minutes
 - Review 3 manifestation of Racism—individual, institutional, cultural
 - Name some institutions
 - Purpose of institutions—create, manage, and distribute the resources necessary for life
 - Can you think of examples of Racism in institutions

- ❖ Racism in institutions 45 minutes
 - Take a look at how Racism became “baked-in” institutions
 - A version of “Diversity Bingo”—laws and court decisions will be on a bingo sheet. Participants will be asked to get signatures from others who know something about these laws/court decisions (see page 4)
 - Chart a vertical wall of history asking for input from participants as we add laws/court decisions (see pages 5-11)

- ❖ Current issues 25 minutes
 - Presidential Race
 - War in Iraq
 - Financial Bail Out
 - Immigration
 - As these issues are discussed, ask/point out the role of Racism, laws and court decisions

- ❖ Application
 - Visit Capital/congressmen, White House and National Archives

HISTORY BINGO

Read over your Bingo card and note which laws or court decision you know something about. Be prepared to sign your name on other peoples' cards in the squares that you know and to share what you know with them. You will be given a specific amount of time to go around the room and find people who can sign your card. Note that you are not allowed to sign any squares on your own card. How many squares can you fill?

1790 Naturalization Law	Dawes Act— 1887	Executive Order 9066— 1942	Termination Act 1953	Relocation Act 1956
3/5 Doctrine 1787	Plessy v Ferguson 1896	McCarren Walter Act— 1952	Civil Rights Act 1875	English Only Laws 1981-2008

Indian Removal Act—1830	Ozawa v U.S. 1922	Operation Wetback— 1954	Forakker Act 1900	Illegal Immigration Reform & Immigrant Responsibility Act 1996
Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo—1848	U.S. v Bhagat Singh Thind 1923	Brown v. Board of Education— 1954	1917 Immigration Act	CA Proposition 209—1996
Chinese Exclusion Act—1882	Bracero Program 1942	VA Colony Slave Codes— 1705	GI Bill—1944	Patriot Act- 2001

WALL OF HISTORY

1705 **VA Colony Slave Codes**

Chapter 34 said that the murder of a slave by a master in the course of punishment was not considered murder.

And if any master, or owner, or other person, by his or her order, correcting such slave, and shall happen to be killed in such correction, it shall not be accounted felony; but the master, owner and every such other person so giving correction, shall be free and acquit of all punishment and accusation for the same, as if such accident had never happened.

1787 **3/5 Doctrine**

The three-fifths compromise is found in Article 1, Section 2, Paragraph 3 of the United States Constitution: “Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Person, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons.”

1790 **Naturalization Law**

- Constitution didn’t specify who/how be citizens
- 1st law defining citizenship
- Specified that naturalized citizenship be reserved for
 “any alien, being a free **White** person who shall have resided within the limits and under the jurisdiction of the US for a term of 2 years.”
- Every naturalization act from 1790 until 1952, Congress included the “White person” prerequisite.

1830 **Indian Removal Act**

- Provided for “an exchange of lands with any of the Indians residing in any of the states and territories, and for their removal west of the river Mississippi.”
- Mass forced relocations of the Creek, Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Seminole and other nations to Oklahoma—Trail of Tears
- To open up region for the exclusive use and occupancy of Euro Americans and their Black slaves

1848 **Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo**

- Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, 1848, ended US war with Mexico.

- The Treaty gave US half the land mass of Mexico, established Mexican cultural and religious norms in the new territory, and guaranteed former Mexicans living in the territory all the rights and privileges of US citizenship.
- US citizens moved in, the rights and privileges of Mexicans eroded, cultural norms became Anglo-American. When a White majority had moved in, the territory became states and the constitutions and laws of these states directly contradicted and violated the Treaty.

1875 Civil Rights Act

- During the late 1860s and early 1870s numerous laws were passed protecting the rights of Black Citizens including the 1875 Civil Rights Act which outlawed the exclusion of Blacks in public accommodations. When federal troops were removed, all this changed. (Compromise that made Hayes President took troops from South.)
- In 1883 the Supreme Court nullified the Civil Rights Act

1882 Chinese Exclusion Act

- Chinese labors were brought to work on railroads, farms, and mines. But they were expected to return to their native countries when the work was done. Only men were allowed to come—the message was “don’t plan to settle here.”
- The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was the 1st law that prohibited the entry of immigrants on the basis of nationality. It singled out the Chinese on the basis of race and excluded them from citizenship. It suspended the immigration of Chinese laborers for 10 years. In 1884 was expanded to exclude all Chinese and was eventually implemented indefinitely.

1887 Dawes Act

- 138 million acres held by Indian tribes—not owned individually; tribes held it collectively
- Act imposed individual land ownership on Indian people. The US usurped the power to define who is and who is not Indian
- Every US defined Indian person was to receive their own parcel of land.
- To be eligible, Indians had to prove that they were at least ½ Indian. If they could meet this blood quantum and prove it, family heads received 160 acres, single person over 18 or orphans under 18 received 80 acres, children under 18 received 40 acres.
- But if you were a full-blood Indian (legally defined ‘incompetents’), you were issued “trust patents” meaning you had no control over your allotted property for 25 years. Mixed-bloods received immediate control over their allotted property.
- Reduced the Indian land holdings for 138 million to 48 million. The so-called “surplus” land was given to White settlers through the homestead acts.

Eventually all services and resources from the United States government depended on proving “blood quantum.”

1896 Plessy v Ferguson “separate but equal”

On June 7, 1892, Homer Plessy boarded a car of the East Louisiana Railroad that was designated by Whites for use by White patrons only. Although Plessy was one-eighth black and seven-eighths White, under Louisiana state law he was classified as an African-American, and thus required to sit in the "colored" car. When Plessy refused to leave the White car and move to the colored car, he was arrested and jailed. In his case, *Homer Adolph Plessy v. The State of Louisiana*, Plessy argued that the East Louisiana Railroad had denied him his constitutional rights under the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments of the United States. However, the judge presiding over his case, John Howard Ferguson, ruled that Louisiana had the right to regulate railroad companies as long as they operated within state boundaries. Plessy sought a writ of prohibition. Plessy took it to the Supreme Court of Louisiana where he again found an unreceptive ear, as the state Supreme Court upheld Judge Ferguson's ruling.

1900 Foraker Act

In 1898 US won the Spanish American War and acquired Puerto Rico

- Declared Puerto Rico a territory of the US
- Forbade trade with any other country, and replaced the peso with the US dollar.
- US corporations in PR have consistently been protected by US law, making PR a US colony

1901 Downes v. Bidwell: “The island of PR is a territory appurtenant and belonging to the US, but not a part of the US and without the revenue clauses of the Constitution”.

- Imposed citizenship Puerto Ricans while denying them Constitutional rights.
- PR Free Trade Zone, 1947—businesses there exempt from federal taxes

1917 Immigration Act

- The ban on Asian immigration was extended geographically to create the *Asiatic Barred Zone*. (Asian-Pacific triangle)
- Congress passed it Feb 4, 1917, overriding President Woodrow Wilson's December 14, 1916 veto.
- This zone was further expanded in 1924 to include all Asian countries, including both east and south Asia. This Immigration Act of 1924 established the “national origins quota system.”
- It remained partially in effect even after the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act and was not fully lifted until the 1965 amendments were added creating the 1965 Immigration Act.

1922 Ozawa v U.S.

Mr. Takao Ozawa, who was born in Japan, but had lived in the US for 28 years, argues that because he had light skin, he was really White and therefore eligible for citizenship. He was denied citizenship. The court ruled that White persons are persons of what is popularly known as the Caucasian race, and it had been established that the Japanese were members of the Mongolian race.

1923 U.S. v Bhagat Singh Thind

The Court ruled that although Asian Indians are classified scientifically as Caucasian, Mr. Thind was not White because the law applies to those persons who are “commonly understood” to be White, and that would not be Indians from Asia. Because of this ruling, not only was Mr. Thind denied citizenship, but persons who had been made citizens based on the “Caucasian” definition of Whiteness, were denaturalized.

1942 Bracero Program

- Intentional process by US to recruit Mexican stoop laborers in the wake of military integration during WW II
- When US done with them, sent back home.

1942 Executive Order 9066

- Sent to 20 internment camps in deserts and swamps
 - Treated as a group; individuals interned without regard for due process; only a few received hearings
 - The Order originally included the detainment of Germans and Italians, but it was only applied to Japanese Americans and Japanese (not those in Hawai'i)
- Lt. General John L. DeWitt, in charge of western defense, said:
- You needn't worry about the Italians at all except in certain cases. Also, the same for the Germans except for individual cases. But we must worry about the Japanese all the time until he is wiped off the map.
- Top officials knew Japanese Americans no threat. J. Edgar Hoover had already rounded up Japanese, German, Italian Americans he thought were dangerous.
 - The Japanese Americans lost their homes and successful businesses. At same time 33,000 Japanese Americans served in US armed forces during War [not uncommon for a soldier home on leave to visit his family in an internment camp].

1944 GI Bill

- United States Employment Service (USES) Help veterans find jobs. Unemployed veterans receive \$20 per week for up to year. VA provided guaranteed home, farm, and business loans. Paid 4 years tuition for education or vocational training.

- Because these benefits were distributed locally and in a totally segregated society, veterans of color were denied access to the jobs they had been trained for in service, unemployment because wouldn't take low paying jobs,
- Couldn't get loans. . Suburbs included restrictive covenants which dictated, by race, to who a home owner could or could not sell their property.
- Couldn't find employers for on-the-job training or were taken advantage of. Colleges wouldn't admit; not enough black colleges.
- After the war, many People of Color were denied veterans' benefits because they had served in jobs that were not considered eligible for such benefits. Many more were deliberately not informed about the benefits, were discouraged from applying when they inquired about them, or simply had their applications for benefits denied. The report cited above concludes "Thus, not only were far fewer blacks than Whites able to participate in these programs, but those blacks who could participate received fewer benefits than their White counterparts." Kivel, p. 28

1952 McCarran Walter Act

- The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 upheld the national origins quota system established by the Immigration Act of 1924. It also ended Asian exclusion from immigrating to the United States and introduced a system of preferences based on skill sets and family reunification.
- At the basis of the Act was the continuation and codification of the National Origins Quota System. It revised the 1924 system to allow for national quotas at a rate of one-sixth of one percent of each nationality's population in the United States in 1920. As a result, 85 percent of the 154,277 visas available annually were allotted to individuals of northern and western European lineage. The Act continued the practice of not including countries in the Western Hemisphere in the quota system, though it did introduce new length of residency requirements to qualify for quota-free entry.
- The 1952 Act created symbolic opportunities for Asian immigration, though in reality it continued to discriminate against them. The law repealed the last of the existing measures to exclude Asian immigration, allotted each Asian nation a minimum quota of 100 visas each year, and eliminated laws preventing Asians from becoming naturalized American citizens. Breaking down the "Asiatic Barred Zone" was a step toward improving U.S. relations with Asian nations. At the same time, however, the new law only allotted new Asian quotas based on race, instead of nationality. An individual with one or more Asian parent, born anywhere in the world and possessing the citizenship of any nation, would be counted under the national quota of the Asian nation of his or her ethnicity or against a generic quota for the "Asian Pacific Triangle." Low quota numbers and a uniquely racial construction for how to apply them ensured that total Asian immigration after 1952 would remain very limited.

1953 Termination Act

- The United States unilaterally decided to terminate the existence of certain Indian tribes so that the US would no longer have treaty responsibilities or obligations. What followed was the “termination” or suspension of federal services to the tribes no longer recognized as existing.
- One of the movers and shakers of the policy was Dillon S. Meyer. He had been appointed Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1950. Before that, he had
- been the director of War Relocation Authority responsible for administering internment camps. (Takaki, *Different Mirror*, 415)
- Included Nez Percé, Coeur d’Alene, Osage, Menominee, Salish, Kootenai, Anishinabé, others in NY, Iowa, Oregon, all in western Washington, Texas, Michigan, Kansas, Nebraska and Louisiana

1954 Operation Wetback

- A project of the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to remove about four million illegal immigrants from the southwestern United States, with a focus on Mexican nationals. (Early on in Eisenhower administration)
- In some cases, illegal immigrants were deported along with their American-born children, who were by law U.S. citizens. Some Native Americans were also “deported”—Mexican looking
- Mexicans caught in the roundup were not simply released at the border; they were taken deep within Mexico before being set free.
- Tens of thousands more were put aboard two hired ships, the *Emancipation* and the *Mercurio*. The ships ferried the aliens from Port Isabel, Texas, to Vera Cruz, Mexico, more than 500 miles south.

1954 Brown v Board of Education

- A landmark decision of the United States Supreme Court, which overturned earlier rulings going back to *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896
- Declared state laws that established separate public schools for black and White students denied black children equal educational opportunities
- Handed down on May 17, 1954, the Warren Court's unanimous (9-0) decision stated that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."

1956 Relocation Act

- Provided funding to establish job training centers for American Indians in various urban centers
- Had denied a similar request for job training centers on the reservations
- Those who took the opportunity were required to sign agreements they would not return to the reservation
- By 1980, more than half of the 1.6 million Native Americans were scattered to cities across country
- Government didn’t have to provide services since not on reservation.

1981. .English Only Laws

- 1980 *Garcia v Gloor*
- 1998 CA Proposition 227

1996 The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act

- Over 200 pages long
- Previously, immediate deportation was triggered only for offences that could lead to five years or more in jail. Under the Act, minor offences such as shoplifting, may make an individual eligible for deportation. The Act also applies to residents who have married American citizens and have American-born children.
- It was applied retroactively to all those convicted of deportable offenses. This included US residents who committed minor offences decades ago.
 - ✓ In 2001, the U.S. Supreme Court decided that Congress did not intend IIRIRA to be applied retroactively to those who pleaded guilty to a crime prior to the enactment of IIRIRA, if that person would not have been deportable at the time that he pleaded guilty. (*INS v. St. Cyr*).
 - ✓ In spite of the 2001 ruling the way the IIRIRA law is used in practice has had so little public scrutiny and oversight so as to make its further use questionable.
- In an effort to curb illegal immigration, Congress voted to double the U.S. Border Patrol to 10,000 agents over five years and mandated the construction of fences at the most heavily trafficked areas of the U.S.-Mexico border.

1996 CA Proposition 209

- A California ballot proposition voted into law which amended the state constitution to prohibit public institutions from considering race, sex, or ethnicity. It had been supported and funded by the California Civil Rights Initiative Campaign, led by University of California Regent Ward Connerly, and opposed by affirmative action advocates and supporters.
- In the November 2006 election in Michigan, a similar amendment was passed, entitled the Michigan Civil Rights Initiative.
- NE this year
- Repeals affirmative action

2001 USA PATRIOT Act

- The contrived acronym stands for "Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001"
- Increases the ability of law enforcement agencies to search telephone, e-mail communications, medical, financial and other records
- Eases restrictions on foreign intelligence gathering within the United States
- Expands the Secretary of the Treasury's authority to regulate financial transactions, particularly those involving foreign individuals and entities
- Enhances the discretion of law enforcement and immigration authorities in

- detaining and deporting immigrants suspected of terrorism-related acts
- Expands the definition of terrorism to include domestic terrorism, thus enlarging the number of activities to which the USA Patriot Act's expanded law enforcement powers can be applied.

INDIVIDUAL RACISM SESSION (2 hours)

- ❖ Worship/Bible Study 30 minutes
- ❖ Introduce individual Racism 10 minutes
 - Review 3 manifestation of Racism—individual, institutional, cultural
 - Power³ shapes us into racial roles—internalized racial oppression and internalized racial superiority
 - ✓ IRO—A complex multi-generational socialization process that teaches People of Color to believe, accept, and live out negative societal definitions of self and to fit into and live out inferior societal roles. These behaviors support and help maintain the race construct.
 - ✓ IRS—A complex multi-generational socialization process that teaches White People to believe, accept and live out superior societal definitions of self and to fit into and live out superior societal roles. These behaviors define and normalize the race construct.
 - ✓ These socialization processes support and reinforce each other in a “dance” that helps maintain the race construct.
- ❖ How Racism shapes and misshapes us 60 minutes
 - Video “Class Divided” emphasize how quickly we are socialized
 - Early messages (page 63 in *The Anti-Racist Cookbook*)
- ❖ Examples of Racism shaping individuals 20 minutes
 - How did Racism shape George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson, Frederick Douglass, Benjamin Banneker?
 - How does Racism shape Christal, Martha, Dwight?
 - How does Racism shape participants?
- ❖ Application
 - Visit National Mall Monuments and Frederick Douglass National Historic Site

CULTURAL RACISM SESSION (2 hours)

- ❖ Worship/Bible Study 30 minutes

- ❖ Introduce culture 30 minutes
 - Review 3 manifestation of Racism—individual, institutional, cultural
 - Chart “What is culture?”
 - Identity mapping
 - ✓ Culture is collective, transmitted through a socialization process
 - ✓ Name some groups that socialize us
 - ✓ Have participant draw a circle in the middle of a page and label it “me.” Then have them draw other circles, some close, some farther away from the center circle. Label them with socializing groups, those with the most influence on the person closer to the circle.
 - ✓ Debrief
 - ✓

- ❖ Cultural Racism 60 minutes
 - Definition—A racially defined dominant societal group uses systemic power:
 - ✓ To **impose** its way of life onto oppressed groups
 - ✓ To **destroy, distort, discount** and **discredit** their cultures
 - ✓ While simultaneously **appropriating** aspects of their cultures without accountability to these communities
 - Play “Outlanders”
 - ✓ Introduction: Ask the group if they have ever experienced cultural prejudice or Racism. Ask questions like, “Have you ever been to another country, or even to a different part of this country, where the people spoke differently, or where the food was unfamiliar? How did that make you feel? Confused, angry, lonely?”

Ask the participants if they have experienced any incidents of cultural Racism directed at them.

Then say something like, “Today we are going to play a game called Outlanders. In this game, all of you will have an opportunity to be Outlanders or scouts gathering information about an alien culture. The two cultures are Arvags and Zenonites. The Arvags and the Zenonites dwell on separate planets and know nothing of each other’s culture. They have recently developed the skills for space travel that allow them to visit the other’s planet. Each group sends a succession of scouts or Outlanders to the other planet to learn the ways of its culture.

“We will divide into two groups of roughly equal size. Facilitators will help each group prepare for the game in a soundproof area.”

- ✓ Learning About the Cultures: Divide the group into the Arvags and Zenonites and have them go into separate rooms to prepare. Distribute copies of the Zenonites handout to one group and the Arvags handout to the other group. Be sure they do not show their instructions to anyone in the other group.

When participants are settled in their groups, let them read the handout silently or aloud. Discuss the instructions with each group until they are clear.

Have everyone put on their identification signs.

- ✓ Play: The facilitators of each culture help the Arvags and Zenonites select Outlanders to travel to the alien planet. Each culture will have four attempts to send their scouts. If the planets have four to six beings, select one or two Outlanders for each attempt; if seven to nine, two or three; if ten to twelve, three or four; and if thirteen or more, select at least four.

Explain that because of limited technology and uncertainty about how long it is possible to survive in an alien world, the Outlanders will have only five minutes to try to decode the habits of the other culture before they must return to their home planets to share with the next team what they have learned about the alien culture.

If it is apparent before the third attempt that the scouts need more time to decipher the other culture, see the option below.

Tell them that the Arvags and Zenonites, proud of their traditions and set in their ways, will make no attempt to help the Outlanders understand their culture.

Round Three Option

If by round three it becomes apparent that the scouts need more time to gather information, announce that new technology is available to allow longer stays in the alien environment, and increase the mission time to eight or ten minutes. Be sure to leave at least 15 minutes for group discussion at the end of the game.

- ✓ Debriefing: At the end of play, players remove their identification and resume their human identities. They then have five minutes in their

respective groups to discuss the information they have gathered and to develop a description and analysis of the alien culture.

After they have shared with the other inhabitants of their planet, bring the groups together so that the cultural secrets can be revealed and the experiences of both the Arvag and Zenonite Outlanders can be shared.

Encourage discussion of the experience with questions such as:

1. Was it difficult to understand the other culture?
 2. How did it feel to be an alien on another planet?
 3. Did you think one culture was better than the other?
 4. Have you ever experienced anything like this in real life?
 5. What did you learn from this activity?
- Use the rotating circle to discuss examples of imposing, destroying, distorting discounting, discrediting and appropriating culture
 -

❖ Application

- Visit Smithsonian, especially Anacostia Community Museum and National Museum of the American Indian
- Post-Test Survey Questionnaires

APPENDIX B
A SAMPLE OF PRE-TEST/POST-TEST SURVEYS, INTERVIEWS, JOURNAL
ENTRIES

Rev. Christal L. Williams

Christian Church in Illinois & Wisconsin

Respondent Geographical Area: _____

Date: _____

Respondent Classification: _____

“A Model for Improving Racial Understanding among Youth in the Christian Church in
Illinois and Wisconsin

Pre-Test Questionnaire

Please circle the number which best describes your immediate Response:

(#1 I don't, #2 Seldom, #3 Often, #4 Always)

As a youth in the Region of the CCIW how often do you:

1. Confront others when they are making racial jokes and comments?

(#1. I do not, #2.Seldom, #3.Often, and #4. Always)

2. Call someone a racial slur or name?

(#1. I don't, #2 Seldom, #3 Often, #4.Always)

3. Avoid using words that repeats negative stereotypes of persons of other cultures?

(# I do not #2. Seldom #3. Often #4. Always)

4. Are willing to get to know people from different cultures and groups as individuals?

(#1 I do not # 2. Seldom #3. Often #4 Always)

5. Discuss and understand holidays, events, and societal gatherings of those from a different culture than your own? (Ex. MLK Holiday, African-American History Month, Casmir Pulaski Day, Juneteenth, Yom Kippur, Ramadan, etc?)

(#1 I do not #2. Seldom #3. Often #4 Always)

6. Attend Parties or other functions where other cultures are present?

(#1 I do not, #2. Seldom, #3 Often, #4 Always)

7. Attend Church events where other cultures are present?

(#1 I do not, #2. Seldom, #3. Often, #4 Always)

8. Are on school or church committees where other cultures are represented and actively participating?

(#1. I do not, #2. Seldom, #3. Often #4 Always)

9. Have friends who are of a different culture than the one in which you grew up?

(#1. I do not, #2. Seldom, #3. Often, #4. Always)

10. Judge someone based on the color of his or her skin?

(#1. I do not, #2. Seldom, #3. Often, #4 Always)

11. Attended a Church service unlike your own cultural service?

(#1. I do not #2. Seldom, #3. Often, #4 Always)

Part B:

Answer The Questions True, False, Undecided:

As a Youth in CCIW do you believe?

People should stick with their own culture ? _____
True ☐ False ☐

People should not date people outside their own race? _____
True ☐ False ☐

The Color of Jesus shapes our faith and belief in God? _____
True ☐ False ☐

Racism still exist in the 21st Century? _____

True ☐ False ☐

People should worship in their own cultural communities? _____

True ☐ False ☐

Youth see the color of their Friends? _____

True ☐ False ☐ Undecided ☐

Racism in the Church does not exist? _____

True ☐ False ☐ Undecided ☐

Racism is the Black Communities' Problem? _____

True ☐ False ☐ Undecided ☐

21. Racism is the White Community's Problem? _____

True ☐ False ☐ Undecided ☐

22. Racism is here to stay in this country? _____

True ☐ False ☐ Undecided ☐

23. A Black Man should not be president of the United States of

America? _____

True ☐ False ☐

Part C: Please answer each question in this section with a maximum of two sentences.

In the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Illinois & Wisconsin, communion is the focus of our worship service. How important is communion to you?

In your opinion, what does it mean for all persons to be welcome at the table of the Lord? Does that mean people of all colors, cultures, and ethnicities?

In your opinion what continues to separate people from worshipping together and living in unified as a body of Christ in the church?

If Racism exists in the Church what will you do to try to change it?

What will need to happen in the Region of the Christian Church(Disciples of Christ) in Illinois & Wisconsin to increase the dialogue and help bring racial understanding to our Region?

Can you imagine the world as welcoming and inviting place for all persons? A place where all are accepted as equal children of God ?

Are you willing to participate in an on-going Regional model for Improving Racial Understanding amongst youth in the Christian Church in Illinois & Wisconsin?

(Please check one of the boxes ☐ Yes ☐ No)

Any other suggestions:

Christian Church in Illinois & Wisconsin

Respondent Geographical Area: _____

Date: _____

Respondent Classification: _____

“A Model for Improving Racial Understanding among Youth in the Christian Church in Illinois and Wisconsin.”

Post-Test Questionnaire

Please circle the number which best describes your immediate Response:

(#1 I don't, #2 Seldom, #3 Often, #4 Always)

As a youth in the Region of the CCIW how often do you:

1. Confront others when they are making racial jokes and comments?

(#1. I do not, #2.Seldom, #3.Often, and #4. Always)

2. Call someone a racial slur or name?

(#1. I don't, #2 Seldom, #3 Often, #4.Always)

3. Avoid using words that repeats negative stereotypes of persons of other cultures?

(# I do not #2. Seldom #3. Often #4. Always)

4. Have gotten to know people from different cultures and groups as individuals

(#1 I do not # 2. Seldom #3. Often #4 Always)

5. Discussed and understand holidays, events, and societal gatherings of those from a different culture than your own? (Ex. MLK Holiday, African-American History Month, Casmir Pulaski Day, Juneteenth, Yom Kippur, Ramadan, etc?)

(#1 I do not #2. Seldom #3. Often #4 Always)

6. Attended Parties or other functions where other cultures were present?

(#1 I do not, #2. Seldom, #3 Often, #4 Always)

7. Attended Church events where other cultures are present?

(#1 I do not, #2. Seldom, #3. Often, #4 Always)

8. Have participated on school or church committees where other cultures are represented and actively participating?

(#1. I do not, #2. Seldom, #3. Often #4 Always)

9. Have friends who are of a different culture than the one in which you grew up?

(#1. I do not, #2. Seldom, #3. Often, #4. Always)

10. Judged someone based on the color of his or her skin?

(#1. I do not, #2. Seldom, #3. Often, #4 Always)

11. Attended a Church service unlike your own cultural service?

(#1. I do not #2. Seldom, #3. Often, #4 Always)

Part B:

Answer The Questions True, False, Undecided:

- D) People should stick with their own culture? _____
- E) People should not date people outside their own race? _____
- F) The Color of Jesus shapes our faith and belief in God? _____
- G) Racism still exist in the 21st Century? _____
- H) Racism in the Church does exist? _____
- I) Racism is the Black Community's Problem _____
- J) Racism is the White Community's Problem _____
- K) Racism is here to stay in this country _____
- L) A Black Man should not be president of the United States of America _____
- M) A Woman should not be president of the United States of America _____
- N) A person over the age of seventy should be considered for president _____

Part C: Please answer each question in this section with a maximum of two sentences.

- A) In the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Illinois & Wisconsin, communion is the focus of our worship service. How important is communion to you?

- B) In your opinion, what does it mean for all people to be welcome at the table? Does that mean people of all colors, and ethnicities?

- C) In your opinion what continues to separate people from worshipping together and living in united as a body of Christ?

- D) If Racism exist in the Church what will you do to change it?

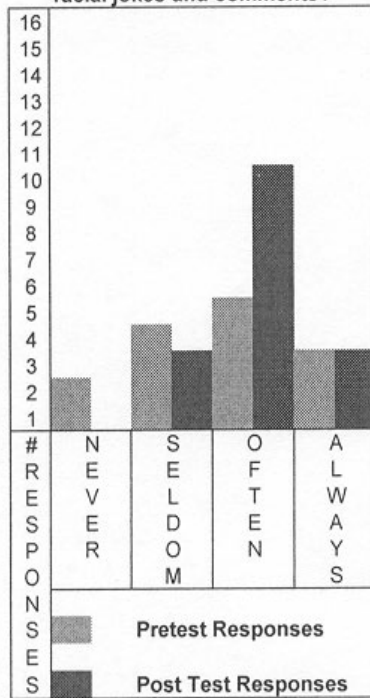
- E) What will need to happen in the Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Illinois & Wisconsin to eradicate Racism?

- F) Do you ever imagine the world as welcoming and inviting place for all persons? A place were all are accepted as a equal children of God?

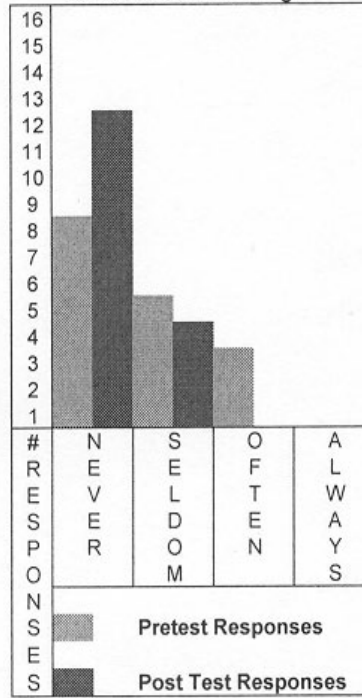
- G) Did you participate in a Model for Improving Racial Understanding and Would do so again?
(Please check one of the boxes ____ Yes ____ No)

Any other suggestions:

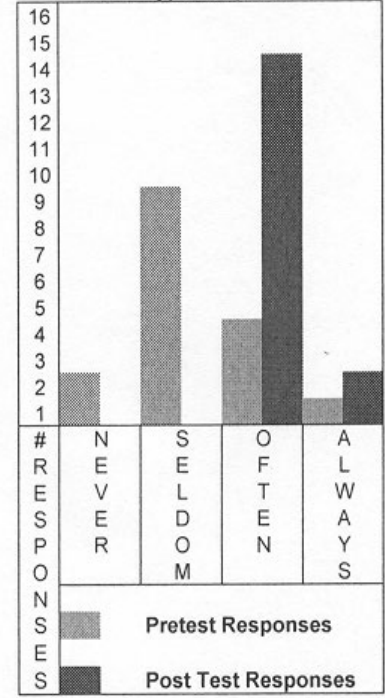
How often do you confront others when they are making racial jokes and comments?

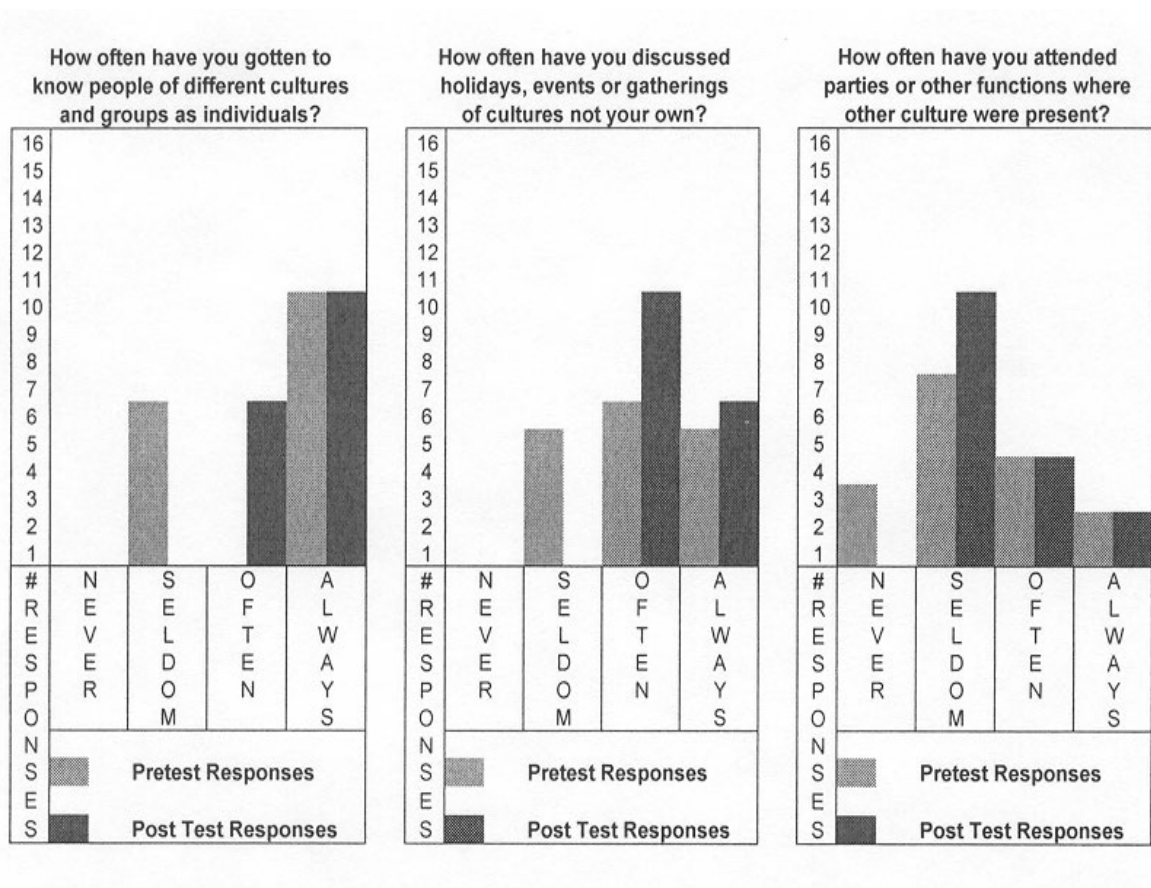


How often do you call someone a racial slur on name without their knowledge?

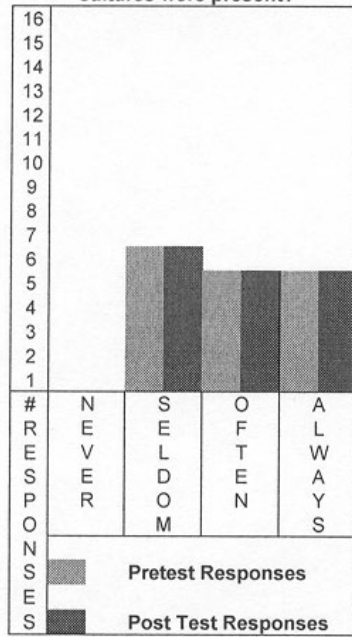


How often do you avoid using words that repeat negative stereotypes of persons?

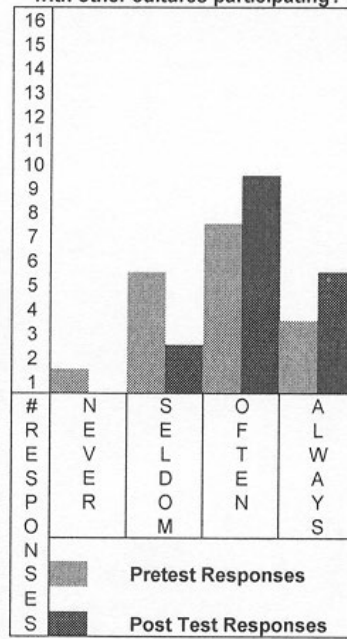




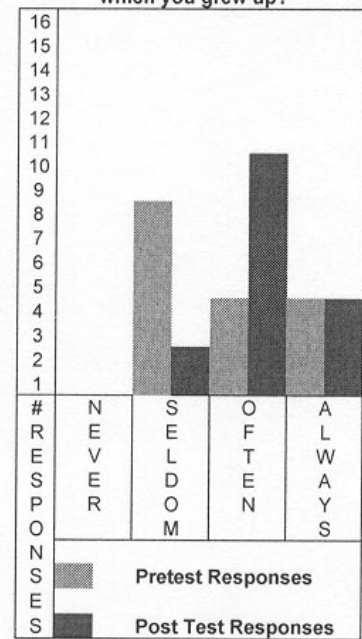
How often have you attended church events where other cultures were present?



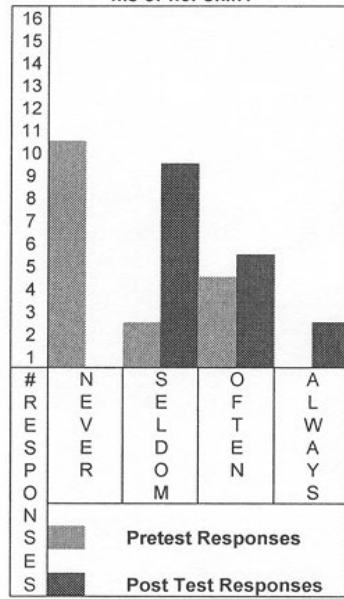
How often have you participated on school or church committees with other cultures participating?



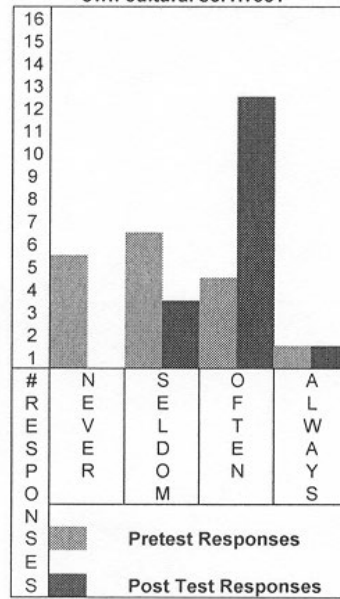
Do you have friends who are of different culture than the one in which you grew up?



How often have you someone
based on the color of his or her
his or her skin?



How often have you attended
a church service unlike your
own cultural service?



WRITER'S JOURNAL ENTRIES

Rev. Christal L. Williams

Journal Entries: 2008

Journal entry#1- May 25, 2008: I met with context associate, Mrs. Martha Herrin at Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles, Illinois to discuss specific literature and bibliographical data that would support the foundational portion of this project. This was the first conversation held to discuss and outline a potential cross-cultural trip with context participants to Washington, DC. The purpose of this trip is to help participants explore and comfortably discuss the issues of Racism in the CCIW Region without having to be physically present in the Region.

Journal entry #2- August 14, 2008: I am surprised at the resistance I am receiving to the project. I am not going to get discourage, because I believe that we as a Regional Church must improve our racial understanding of one another. This resistance is one of the prime reasons why! I tried to do more phone calling and email today, but it has not been as successful as I would have liked to have it been. I will not give up!

Journal entry#3- October 29, 2008: I met the participants in Washington, D.C. for our Cross-Cultural experience. I had to attend peer session in Fort Lauderdale. Therefore, I could not ride the plane with them. We all arrived at the Baltimore Washington Airport about the same time. Yet, I was a few minutes earlier than the group. I met them at the baggage claim. This was our original plan. I want to journal tonight about when I first laid eyes on the group. They were truly segregated. I could see them from the other side of the baggage claim area. They could not see me. I watched the dynamics. Each person was connected and standing closely with their particular cultural group. I wondered about the plane ride. I knew it must have been a long night with Martha and the group. This could be a long three days in D.C.

Journal entry #4- October 31, 2008: We are a couple of days into the trip! It is going great. I need to refresh my mind about why we came to Washington, D.C. Especially, after driving around in circles, and springing my ankle at the White House! The purpose of the Cross-cultural trip to Washington is to lend some discussion about the nature of Racism in that this sin has been directly rooted in the Nation's capital and the birth of America. This trip and experience will be

enhanced by visiting one of our denomination's largest congregations. This congregation being resident in Washington, DC. The National City Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) was church home to two Presidents (James A. Garfield, Lyndon B. Johnson). The National City congregation is home to a "Global Gifts" store, a refugee cross-cultural trading and merchandising enterprise. Secondly, the issues the youth and congregations face around the sacrament of communion and unity in the body of Christ will be discussed at Michigan Park Christian Church along with the Rev. Delores C. Carpenter. I am so excited about the possibilities found in writing a model for improving racial understanding and the participation of all who are here with me in DC. I know that our Region is not always receptive on issues dealing with Anti-Racism/Pro-reconciling initiatives. Also, want to note that tonight we had some productive conversation on the issue of race in the church. The youth were alert and added a fresh perspective on the idea of why we need to step up the dialogue with the church and others. I might add that the Presidential Election is just days away. The participants' are expressing their excitement about the possibility of Barak Obama becoming President.

APPENDIX C
THE WRITER'S NOTES AND ADDITIONAL COMMENTARY ON THE
PROPHET AMOS AND INFORMAL INTERVIEWS

In the Old Testament narrative, the prophet Amos was sent to Israel to prophesy and call Israel back to a place of genuine worship and community. At that time, Israel residing in the northern territory of the promise land referred to as Canaan, had quickly forgotten their past history. This new generation needed to be reminded of the degradation their ancestors, who were once slaves in Egypt, had experienced.

This group forgot that it was Yahweh who graciously chose them as the elect and called them out of their enslavement to a life of freedom and liberty. Yes, this group spent forty years wondering in the wilderness. Yet after the wilderness experience, it was time to address relationship and the idea of covenant.

In the fifth chapter Amos, the prophet, is giving instruction to the people of Israel about their behavior concerning the care for those in and outside of the community. Amos is calling them back to their original roots and connection back to a God who desired them to be in covenant with Godself. The breach of this covenant motivated Amos' words of warning. It is in the fifth chapter and twenty-fourth verse that Amos calls for justice.

Amos 5:24

“But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream.”¹

Peter Craigie offers, “The principle propounded by Amos continues to apply to all worship; if the knowledge of God is absent, it becomes but a hollow shell. Yes, the

¹Amos 5:24 (NRSV).

principle may extend beyond worship.”² Craigie writes, “In any supposedly Christian activity, if the knowledge of God is absent and if righteousness and justice do not flourish, the activity may be in vain.”³

The system in Amos was one of injustice, poverty, oppression, greed, and economic alienation. Walls were built and persons were closed out of the social system of Israel. Coogan says, “Amos prophecy stressed social injustices of the times.”⁴ Coogan states,

His main target was the families living in Samaria, who he portrayed as wallowing in luxury and leisure at the expense populace in the towns and villages of the countryside, and probably even those living around the citadel of the capital itself. Those exploited in this way are designated not only the ‘poor’ and the ‘needy,’ but also the ‘righteous.’⁵

This text ends with a call for justice. Hanson says, “Yahweh, in undivided worship of the one true God, and in the grateful embodiment of God’s compassion and righteousness, in ‘loving good’ and ‘establishing justice in the gate,’ God’s presence could return to the land, bringing shalom to the remnant of Joseph. Although Amos’s message was severe, a lighter message in this setting would not have been more compassionate, but would merely have contributed further to Israel’s act of self-deception.”⁶

² Peter C. Craigie. *The Daily Study Bible Series: Twelve Prophets Volume 1: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1984), 165.

³ Ibid., 165.

⁴ Michael D. Coogan, *The Oxford History of the Biblical World*, (Oxford: Oxford Press, 1998), 234.

⁵ Ibid., 234.

⁶ Paul Hanson, *The People Called: The Growth Community in the Bible*, 157.

INFORMAL INTERVIEWS QUESTIONS

- A) Describe in a about a paragraph or few sentences your definition of Racism?
- B) How has Racism affected your life and Spiritual journey?
- C) Is it a problem in our Region? In what ways?
- D) Will you talk to me about what you feel the body of Christ must do to improve racial dialogue?

Interview One: October 2008, in Washington, D.C at the Stay Bridge Suites Hotel.
An interviewee who is a lifetime member of the Christian Church in Illinois.

“Racism is when one group is stereotyped against based on skin color.” Racism has not effected *Spiritual journey because, I just keep praying to God that we all get along. Yes, being a member of a predominately, Caucasian denomination has sometimes been hard. But, I have a strong relationship with Jesus and I know that He is going to fix this color issue. Yes, Racism is a problem in the Region. It wasn’t until you came that I started to really think about it in the church! As we travel to take our youth places to dance, I have watched the people stare and look at us. They do not necessarily get with us as we are worshipping and I just shake my head and say it is pitiful and we do what we need to do and leave. The Body of Christ must first ask for forgiveness that we have allow the system of Racism to overtake our churches, school and other places. The church must take the lead in helping to bring understanding, reconciliation and leadership to the table. There is no excuse. I am willing to do what I need to do to help. That’s why I came on this trip.”*

Interviewee Two: Airplane, November 2008:

A White youth participant who grew up in the Christian Church in Illinois and Wisconsin.

“You taught me that Race Prejudice +the misuse of the power in systems and institution equals Racism. I do not really like that definition, but it seems to make more sense to me now that I have come on the trip to Washington with the group. I did not know that Racism had affected my life and Spiritual journey. I have gone to church my whole life, with White people and to school. I thought it was just normal. I know that we do not have many People of Color around where I live, but I just did not think much of it until I came to D.C and participated in other activities. Yes, it is a probably because, everything is so... well, you know... ‘White’ and that is definitely, not the way of the entire world. We need to do some mixing and moving around. That is why I have enjoyed this trip, and

model because I got a chance to talk with people I would not have ever met before. This has been hard work. Oh yeah, the church is going to have to work hard and be willing to come out of the comfort zones. Also, Christal we will need to have more of these youth opportunities. The youth are where it's at. Maybe, we can talk about doing something monthly. That is what it is going to take to help improve the dialogue."

Interviewee Three: November 2008, CCIW Regional Assembly, Springfield, Illinois.
Church Leader in the Christian Church in Illinois and Wisconsin.

"... I know that you are writing this paper and you have to do these interviews, but I worry about stirring up the pot on the issue of race. To me it is when people are treated unfairly or discriminated against because of the color of their skin. If you have been a Black member of this church then you have come to expect some tokenism or unfair practice. It is just how it is. Yes, it affects my faith. It causes me to have to pray harder than I really want too. I am praying all of the time so that I will treat people the way I know God wants me to treat them no matter how I am treated. You ask me all the time what I think that this region is going to have to do. Well, as I always tell you we must fall to our knees as a country and repent. You know I believe in reparations and if this country repents and then makes sure all of its institutions do the same that would take care of the first thing on the list. Secondly, it needs to be taught in our churches. We need to call Racism sin. It would scare the hell out of some of these so-called, Christian folks. We need to do what you are doing...get with the kids and have opportunities and occasions for them to mix and mingle. I think that would scratch the surface. Don't you? Now all I am doing is talking right? You not going to put this on television or anything? Cause, I can be pretty frank!"

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